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O'Halloran

A
1 GENERAL HISTORY
2 OF
3 I R E L A N D,
FROM THE
EARLIEST ACCOUNTS
TO THE
CLOSE of the TWELFTH CENTURY,
COLLECTED FROM THE
MOST AUTHENTIC RECORDS.

IN WHICH
New and interesting Lights are thrown on the remote Histories of other
Nations as well as of both BRITAINS,

4 BY Mr. O' H A L L O R A N,
Author of an Introduction to the History and Antiquities of Ireland.

IN TWO VOLUMES.
V O L. I.

L O N D O N,

Printed for the AUTHOR, by A. HAMILTON:

And sold by G. ROBINSON, Pater-noster-Row; J. MURRAY, N^o 32, Fleet-street; J. ROBSON,
New Bond-street; and by Mess. FAULKNER, HOEY, and WILSON, in Dublin.

MDCCLXXVIII.

GENERAL HISTORY
OF
IRISH AND
FROM THE
EARLIEST ACCOUNTS
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BY MR. O'HALLORAN

Author of an Introduction to the History and Antiquities of Ireland.

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VOL. I.

LONDON.

Printed for the AUTHOR, by A. HARRISON.

And sold by G. Robinson, Cornhill; Row, Pall-mall; N. & J. Clarke, Strand;
New York: by J. E. Paterson, Hoxey, and Wilson, in Nassau.

MCCCLXXVII.





TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

MOROUGH O'BRYEN,

Earl and Baron of INCHQUIN, Baron of BURREN, and Lord
Lieutenant and Custos Rotulorum of the County of CLARE.

MY LORD,

NO nation paid greater attention to its history and antiquities than the ancient Irish. The care of letters was a particular object of state attention; and the laws and ordinances respecting history, philosophy, and poetry, became a part of the studies of our monarchs*. The numerous universities of the

* Teagasc-Cormbhic-Mhic-Art, or the Royal Admonitions of Cormac to his son Cairbre.

kingdom were founded on such liberal principles, that, not only the natives, but strangers from different parts of Europe, were received into them, and supplied with all the necessaries of life, *and even with books*, gratis! The Venerable *Bede* is an unexceptionable authority for these facts, with respect to the Saxons*; and proofs are not wanting that such was the case with other nations of Europe†. Need more, my Lord, be said to the point, than, that such was the pre-eminence of the Irish in letters, that, by universal consent, the kingdom acquired the title of *Insula Doëtorum*!

But the protection they vouchsafed to the sciences, did not diminish their love for arms. In other countries, arts and letters were the consequences of power and conquests: in Ireland, they attended and added vigour to both. Glory, intrepidity, and the love of their country were the constant themes of the antiquarians and bards; and how well our princes, our nobility, and military profited by their lessons, our annals sufficiently proclaim. Whilst the rest of the world bent the knee to all-powerful Rome, Ireland

† Histor. Ecclesiast. Britan. lib. iii. cap. 27.

‡ Vita St. Cataldi, Usserii Primord. Eccles. Britan. p. 755, &c.

D E D I C A T I O N. v

alone remained free and independent, and held forth her arms to support every struggle for liberty in Britain and Gaul. From Tacitus we may collect *, that Rome could not count on the peaceable possession of Britain, until Ireland was subdued, being the country from whence the disaffected drew their resources; and the subsequent periods of our history will shew, who were the real authors and promoters of these mighty confederacies which accelerated the ruin of that extended empire!

Why an history, in itself so curious and instructive—which throws new lights on history and chronology in general, and (*what makes it still more valuable*) which is the only one, of all the nations of Europe, that has been transmitted to us pure and uninterrupted, from the remotest antiquity to this day—why, I say, it should be, not only greatly neglected, but grossly misrepresented in modern times, is not to my purpose to enquire. It is sufficient, my Lord, that, animated with the love of truth, and of my country, I have laboured to render that justice to our ancestors which had been so long denied them, and to lay open to public view these annals, which seem-

* Vita Julii Agricolæ.

ed to have been destined to dust and oblivion! A work of this kind, extracted from pure native records, unsophisticated with modern systems and modern opinions, I flatter myself will appear no unacceptable present to your Lordship, and to the curious.

To whom my Lord, with greater propriety could such an attempt be inscribed, or who better intitled to this mark of respect and attention, than the EARL of INCHQUIN, the lineal descendant of the first of heroes and legislators, the renowned BRIEN BOIRUMHE, and through him, of Heber, eldest son to Milesius? To support and protect whatever may tend to elucidate the History of Ogygia; and by your precepts, as well as example, to induce others to unite in a cause so interesting to letters, are in fact, my Lord, duties which you owe to your own dignity and to your ancestors, as well as to your country. For what avails it, that Ireland should in justice rank foremost amongst the nations of Europe*; and that her sons, for purity, antiquity, and nobility of blood, exceed all others, if these facts are not properly set forth? Her title to precedence is not the less valid because it has not been fully asserted; and it may be said, that the ne-

* Vol. II. of this work, from page 65 to 69.

glect of Irish History is the only enemy to its dignity. From your Lordship, for instance, to Heber, are reckoned ninety-three generations in your house, of which number eighty-four were kings of Thomond, kings of Munster, or monarchs of Ireland; so justly may the *atavis edite regibus* of Horace be applied to your Lordship. Thus a peerage could be no accession of honour to it; and this is so true, that all North Munster were in flames when it first became known that such a title was adopted. The same thing happened in Ulster, when Con O' Neill assumed the title of Earl of Tirone: it was the case with Mac Carthy in Desmond, with Fitz Patric in Ossory, &c.

However sollicitous I have been to render this work worthy public attention, your lordship's protection, and the title which it bears, yet I am satisfied that an undertaking on so extensive a plan, and on a new scale, must necessarily be subject to many imperfections; and I greatly regret that my situation in life would not permit me to devote to it all that leisure which it merited, and which I wished. Yet be its defects what they may, I will venture to affirm that it exhibits a clearer and more comprehensive view of the true state and importance of Irish history than any other work extant.

Deign

viii D E D I C A T I O N.

Deign favourably, my Lord, to receive this public testimony of my esteem and attachment, the greatest I can offer, and permit me the honour to subscribe myself, with the highest respect,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most obedient,

and most devoted

humble Servant,

SILVESTER O'HALLORAN.

A

L I S T

O F T H E

S U B S C R I B E R S.

A

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James Aylmer, esq. col. of the regi-
ment Ultonia, in the service of Spain
Thomas Arthur, esq.
Richard Anketill, M. D.
John Anketill, esq. captain in Ultonia's
Richard Anketill, esq. lieutenant in ditto
Lieutenant Francis Anketill
William Ayres, esq. Dublin
Mr. Christopher Allen, merchant, Dublin
John Archibold, merchant, Water-
ford

B

Dowager Countess Barrymore
Earl Besborough
Bellamont
Count Bere Haven
Right Hon. col. William Burton, 2 setts
VOL. I.

Hon. and Right Rev. Dr. Butler, Cork
Edmond Butler, Dunboyne
Sir Lucius O'Brien, bart.
Patrick Bellew, bart.
Charles Burton, bart.
John Brown, bart.
Nathaniel Barry, bart.
James Barry, in the service of Spain
Edmund Burke, esq. member for Bristol
William Burke, esq.
Richard Burke, esq.
William Burke, esq. Bally-Dugan
Thomas Burke, esq. Marble-Hill
Richard Burke, esq. captain in the regi-
ment Hibernia, in the service of Spain
Theobald Bourke, esq. Santa Cruz
Thomas Burgh, esq.
Garraat Barry, esq.
James Barry, esq. captain in Ultonia's
John Browne, esq. Mount Browne
Ivory Browne, esq.
Lancelot Browne, esq. Hampton Court

*A

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 Clarke, London

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 Lord Dartry
 Count Dillon
 Baron D'Arcey
 Right hon. sir Rob. Tilson Deane, bart.
 twenty sets
 Lady Deane
 Jocelyn Deane, esq.
 Joseph Deane, esq. Fernmure

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James Uniack, esq.
Exham Vincent, esq.

Y

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Robert Wrixon, esq.
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Robert Wills, esq. Peryborough

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A PRE.

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Z

Clement Zouch, etc.

A P.T.

A variety of causes have conspired to make chronology be obscure, fabulous, and unworthy public notice!

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

to unsatisfactory. No two nations of antiquity are in accord as to any first epochs, not even as to the length

NOTHING has proved so great an obstacle to the study of ancient history as the very great uncertainty in ancient chronology. The Babylonians, the Chaldeans, the Egyptians, and the Chinese, have carried their different chronologies so amazingly far back, that to credit them, one would be almost tempted to suppose the world eternal! The Greeks came much later into the custom of recording historical events; and, it must be confessed, that where they have touched on remote periods, their æras are, to the last degree, uncertain. Even in sacred writ we meet with great discordance in point of chronology; the Septuagint translation of the Bible, and many of the fathers, reckoning 3513 years from the creation to the vocation of Abraham; whilst the Hebrew text, and some of the principal fathers of the church, fix it at 2023! It is on account of this great uncertainty in ancient chronology, that Varro, the most learned historian and philosopher of ancient Rome, deemed every relation, which preceded

ii PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

the first Olympiad (i. e. the year of the world 3232) to be obscure, fabulous, and unworthy public notice !

A variety of causes have concurred to make chronology so unsettled, and of course its concomitant, history, so unsatisfactory. No two nations of antiquity are in accord as to any fixt epocha, nor even as to the length of the year, or the time when it should commence. The Greeks began their æra of certain history from the Olympiads, and the Romans from the foundation of their city. Some have counted time from the solar, others from the lunar year. Even in the Christian world some centuries had passed, from the Incarnation, before it was agreed to compute time from that epocha. To this may be added the different periods in which letters were introduced into countries, the repeated convulsions and revolutions which every nation of the continent has experienced, and the neglect and destruction of annals and records, ever attendant on such general calamities !

The nation, whose History I have the honour of presenting to the public, has experienced none of these misfortunes, at least not in so remarkable a degree as to destroy all her annals, or bring her chronology into any kind of doubt. They appear to have been, from the most remote antiquity, a *polished people*, and with propriety they may be called, *The Fathers of Letters!*

Sequestered in a remote island, giving laws to neighbouring states, and free from foreign invasions for the certain space of 2060 years, they had time and leisure to attend to their history and antiquities; and they certainly exceeded all nations of the world in their attention to these points! As I have endeavoured to elucidate a variety of obscure parts in ancient history, and to determine many controverted æras in ancient chronology, by the annals of Ireland, it is but just that the candid critical reader should receive the clearest evidences and the fullest information, as to their authenticity. This matter satisfactorily explained, he will then, no doubt, naturally inquire, why an history, so manifestly interesting to letters, and which throws such lights on the early laws, religion, and customs of the Celtæ, should lie so long concealed from public view, especially in ages learned and inquisitive as this and the last have proved? But of these points in their order; and first as to our chronology.

The Milesians began their own immediate history with Phænius, the inventor of letters, and their great ancestor. They have not determined on the precise period of time in which he flourished; but yet the generations and names of his lineal successors, to the sons of Milesius, have been preserved with such care and accuracy; and the same subject, from that period to

this day, has been continued with such unexampled fidelity, that it will require little trouble to determine it, with precision and certainty, by admitting of the following reasonable computation. Twenty-three generations are counted from Phœnius to Heber, and I have allowed thirty-five years to each generation, which I think, (considering the remoteness of the time and longevity of the people) will be deemed a fair and reasonable medium. If to this we add eighty-one years for the supposed extent of his life, it will make up the gross sum of eight hundred and eighty-six years. By the Reim-Riogra, or Royal Chronology of Giolla-Caomhain, a writer of great antiquity, ninety monarchs of Ireland are reckoned from Heber to Conaire the Grand, in whose administration the Incarnation happened; and the reigns of these princes, one with another, according to his computation, amounts to 1657 years. But, in this list, a reign of seventy-seven, of seventy, and of sixty years, is allowed to some princes; to one in particular (and, it would seem, merely on account of his surname of Soaglach, or the Long-lived) an hundred and fifty is given! But, in Ireland, the monarchy was elective with respect to persons, though hereditary in point of blood. Minors were declared incapable of governing; and no prince could become a candidate for the throne who had not passed the age of twenty-five. Re-
volutions

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v

volutions were frequent, and the longest sword always determined the contest. Sound criticism and plain sense seem to concur in reducing so improbable a period to a reasonable time, and will, I think, justify me in lopping off an exuberance of three hundred and ninety-three years from this account; so that, from the birth of Phœnius to the Incarnation, comprehends a space of 2146 years, in which a clear chronology, subject to the severest scrutiny, is exhibited, and which, if not under, does not exceed true time.

From this period the Irish chronology is allowed to be accurate by the most critical judges of the matter; yet, as Sir James Ware, and, from him, most British writers, who were very incompetent judges, have affirmed, that our chronology at best is but uncertain till the landing of St. Patrick; let us, for argument sake, admit it to be so, and endeavour to reconcile the number of reigns in this interval to reason and chronology. Loaghaire began his reign A. C. 428, four years before the landing of St. Patrick, and twenty-nine princes intervened between him and Conaire. From the landing of Patrick the most incredulous have not doubted our chronology: nor could it be otherwise, as the time of his legation was so well known to foreign as well as domestic writers. Fifty-one monarchs swayed the Irish sceptre from the days of Loagaire to those of Roderic O'Connor,

last

vi PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

last emperor of Ireland. Now, if we compare the number of reigns in the first and second stages of our history, or from Heber to Conaire, and from him to Loagaire, with those in the third, *or uncontrovertibly true time*, we will see a very close agreement, and that the periods preceding this last epocha, are rather contracted than enlarged. Let us suppose upon an average, that the reigns of these princes, one with another, did not exceed fourteen years each; and when we consider the nature of an elective government, where each prince generally fell by the sword of his successor, it seems a fair medium. The number of reigns from Heber to Conaire are $90 \times 14 = 1260$, just four years less than the time assigned! From Conaire to Loagaire were $29 \times 14 = 406$, which is twenty-two years less than true time; and fifty-one reigns from Loagaire to Roderic, multiplied by fourteen, produce but 714 years, which is about forty years less than the real time. Thus it appears (I apprehend), evident, that instead of extending, I have sensibly contracted our ancient chronology, and that if it does not want half a century of true time, it cannot be deemed a day beyond it.

From this chronology, the periods in which the following interesting facts happened, appear thus—The invention of letters by Phœnius, (computing from the Hebrews), was in the year of the world 1912, the sixty-second year of his age, and sixteenth of his reign.

The

90
14
360
90
1260

PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE. vii

The introduction of letters, of arts, and sciences into Egypt by Niul, the son of Phænius took place, in the year of the world 1941.

The Cretans received the Phœnician alphabet from Cadmus the high-priest, son to Sru, and brother to Heber Scot, in the year of the word 2046; and this at once explains a matter very doubtful and very interesting to ancient history. The Greeks, unable to determine the time in which Cadmus lived, have conjectured it to be after the days of Moses. Now in his days, the Hebrew alphabet contained twenty-two letters, which is six letters more than the Cadmean; and the Israelites, then bordering on Phœnicia have made some literati suppose, that this last alphabet must have contained more letters than antiquity has attributed to it; but we now plainly see, that Cadmus preceded Moses by more than four centuries, which at once removes all doubts, and justifies the reports of antiquity.

The first Phœnician settlement in Africa took place in the year of the word 2279. For it is agreed on, that long before the days of Joshua a Phœnician colony had made a settlement about Carthage, though, till now, the time has not been determined on with any kind of precision.

Briotan, the son of Feargus, with his followers, retired from Ireland to Britain A. M. 2380; and from him the country took this name, (its more ancient one, being Inis-
more,

more, or the Great Island), as all our antiquities declare. From the settlements in Wales, the people were called Cimri, not from being the descendants of Gomer, Cumar in Irish denoting an hilly country, as Wales undoubtedly is.

The Firbolgs, or Belgæ, entered Britain, A. M. 2541; the Damnonii, or Tuatha da Danaans, A. 2736; the Picts took possession of Albany, A. M. 2744; and the Irish Brigantes, of Cumberland, &c. A. M. 2749.

The Brigantes of Spain (so called from Breogan, grandfather to Milesius), became a respectable, warlike, and commercial people, about the year 2600; and a part of their posterity conquered Ireland, in the year of the world 2736.

As to the history of the people, on which this chronology is founded, every evidence and every circumstance that can in reason be expected, seem combined to stamp authority on it. From Phœnius to the sons of Milesius, their exploits, their travels, their successes, and disappointments, have been narrated from age to age, with such an air of native simplicity and candour, that it would be hard to conceive—even supposing it an imposture—what could be proposed by the deception. The shortness of the voyages; their coasting from land to land; and the length of time they were tossed about, so as to take some years in passing from Phœnicia to Getulia, plainly shew, that this expedition was undertaken in the very infancy of
of

of navigation. Their posterity remained near three centuries after this on the African coast, (though a commercial people), before they ventured to sail beyond the Pillars of Hercules; and from the time of Bratha's landing in Galicia, to the conquest of Ireland by the sons of Milesius, included the space of an hundred and fifty years; so formidable did the venturing to launch into the great Atlantic ocean appear to this people! Nay, the circumstance of their being at this time furnished with reflecting and refracting glasses, evidently points out the progress they had made in navigation. But when we find accounts so reconcileable to reason, wonderfully strengthened by the collateral evidences of foreign nations, and THROWING DAY on the obscurest parts of their different histories, can we in justice refuse our assent to them? That the Milesian colony were a learned and a polished people, when they landed in Ireland, the circumstance of their transmitting to posterity the records of the nations who preceded them there, seems alone strongly to prove. Amhergin was then their high-priest. A part of his duty, as well as that of his successor, was, the care of history and genealogy. We have yet preserved in the Leabhar-Lecan part of his writings, particularly a relation of the landing of his brethren and their followers in Ireland, with the numbers who perished in the attempt, in a beautiful style of poetry. From this

epocha, we behold a regular succession of princes, all great encouragers of arts and letters, and some highly celebrated for their erudition and for their writings. We trace the rise of literary societies, the modes by which adepts passed doctors in different faculties, and the great immunities which this order of men possessed, confirmed by Cæsar, with respect to the Gauls, many centuries after. We behold arts, manufactures, and commerce, keep equal pace with letters, as well as their eternal concomitants, wealth and power!

The very form of the Irish constitution shews to demonstration, that it could not subsist without letters. We see from the prince to the peasant, the nation divided into different classes, and all posts of honour, trust, and profit, in these different orders, hereditary in certain families—even in the hierarchy, for above seven centuries, the episcopal order was confined to certain septs—though our history had been silent on this head, yet we should conclude, that a class of people must have been set apart to preserve the genealogies of these different families. How could order or subordination be otherwise preserved? Cæsar tells us, that the Gauls were divided into different classes; and by way of explaining this, does he not at the same time proclaim the flourishing state of letters there, and the great privileges granted to this order of men*?

* Comment. lib. vi.

But

But modern sceptics affirm, that the Irish knew not the use of letters till the landing of St. Patrick. But if this apostle first introduced letters into Ireland, they must undoubtedly be the Roman. And did the Roman alphabet THEN contain no more than seventeen letters? Were these arranged like ours, or were they of similar structure? If all these interrogatories are to be answered in the negative, as they undoubtedly must, what will become of our visionaries? But to remove for ever so great an obstacle to true history and chronology, Cæsar himself tells us, that the Gaulish letters in his days resembled the Greek, and such is the Irish letter even at this day! Now, as from this remark of Cæsar, it becomes evident, that the Gauls and Romans had different kinds of alphabets, it must be a certain consequence, that the Irish could not borrow their letters from ancient Rome, and our history sufficiently proclaims them the eternal enemies of that people.

But, besides all this, the more critically we examine, and the deeper we explore the annals of Ireland, the more convinced we shall become of their genuineness. The monarchy in every period of our history, was confined to the posterity of the three sons of Milesius *only*, except in three instances in the line of Ith, who were in main of the same royal stock. Though all descended from one common ancestor, yet they were divided in in-

b 2

terests ;

terests ; and the clearest head and longest sword generally gained the monarchy. If any doubt had ever been entertained of the veracity of Irish history, must it not have come out some time or other, in the many bloody contests for sovereignty, so disgraceful to our annals? Would it not even serve as a political stimulus, the more to inflame the contending parties? But no such thing! though of different interests, and highly inimical to each other, yet were they in perfect unison, as to their being of one common stock! And nothing can more fully prove this, than the very mode of inaugurating our different princes, as well monarchical as provincial, which *in no instance* was ever deviated from. After the election was declared, and before the coronation oaths were administered, the chief senachie or antiquarian stepped forth, and after bending the knee to the throne, announced to the people aloud, "That Brien-Boirumhe, ancestor
 " to the present earl of Inchiquin, (for instance) the son
 " of Cineidi, the son of Lorcan, the son of Lachtina, the
 " son of Core, son to Anluan, son of Mahon, the son of
 " Turelach, the son of Cathil, the son of Aodh-Caomh, the
 " son of Conal, the son of Eochadh, and so on to Gol-
 " lamh or Milesius, and from him to Phænius, &c. was
 " monarch of Ireland and Albany." And this is the reason that our antiquarians have been so careful to recite the pedigrees, and note the houses from which our different

monarchs came; which though disgusting in many instances to readers, yet we see was observed for the wise purpose, of preserving both the constitution and the history of the kingdom pure. In every particular, except the right of governing, they were in perfect accord. The line of Heber or house of Munster, being descended from the eldest son of Milesius, claimed a kind of prescriptive right to the monarchy, yet the Heremonians, though the youngest branch, gave infinitely more monarchs to Ireland. The Heberians deemed this a kind of usurpation, and the Heremonians contended, that in a country where the sword determined the dispute, power and intrepidity, not seniority, sanctified the claim. We have yet preserved a poem, wrote by Torna-Eigeas, chief bard to Niall the Grand, in the fourth century, reciting the bloody contests between him and Core, king of Munster, for the monarchy. In this, he with great elegance and delicacy, lays before his reader, the pretences of both houses, and the arguments used by their different advocates, and recapitulates the bloody wars carried on from the days of Heber to his own time, for this object—an irrefragable proof surely, even then, of the authenticity of our earlier annals. St. Patrick in the next age presided over the literati in several conventions; and our annals, such as we now find them, were then, and in every succeeding age to the last century, never called

called in question by those who had the best right to judge of them. The uncommon care taken to preserve them pure and uncorrupt, when attended to, must satisfy the most incredulous.

Every province had its history ; every powerful chief, his poet and antiquarian. Their persons were declared sacred, and their ample possessions unmolested. The different provincial records and histories were every third year examined by a committee of the national assembly ; and nothing was admitted into the Seanachas-more, or Great Antiquity—so called as being the national history—but what was strictly true. The greatest punishments awaited on such antiquarians as attempted to disguise truth, or impose falsehoods ; and no instance is recorded of any one's being convicted of these crimes ! These hereditary bards and historians flourished through every period of our history. They existed in Thomond, in Conaught, and in Ulster in some degree, *even to the Revolution.*

We are yet possessed of copies of the Book of Munster. It recites the travels of the Gadelians, from their dereliction of Egypt, to the conquest of Ireland ; and notes down, with great precision, the different generations that intervened. From this period the history is confined to the exploits of this house only, as kings of Leath-Mogha, or monarchs of Ireland, just as it happened. The line
of

of Ith, or Brigantes of Munster, had their hereditary antiquarians also; and Forchern, one of our most celebrated senachies, was poet to Conrigh, the son of Darius, of the Deguids of Munster, who was contemporary with Julius Cæsar.

The Book of Leinster begins with Jughaine the Great, (from whom Jiggin's-Town, near the Naas), monarch of Ireland, A. M. 3587; and through his son Loagaire-Lorc, pursues the exploits and actions of his successors as kings of Leinster. The Book of Leth-Cuin, traces the Heremonian line from the conquest of Ireland to the reign of Jughaine, and then, through his son Cobthaig, continues the same subject to the twelfth century. This psalter got the title of Leth-Cuin, as it treated of all the stock of the Heremonians, in the northern division of Ireland, according to the famous partition treaty in the second century. Keating and other writers of the last century, mention a noble copy of this work on vellum, with the coats of arms of the principal chiefs of Ulster and Conaught, elegantly blazoned on its margins. The Conaught book is quoted by Usher and others, and several extracts from it may be found in the Leabhar-Lecan. The house of Emania, or line of Ir, which cut so conspicuous a figure in our annals, these great protectors of the literati of Ireland on several occasions, could not be without their bards and antiquarians; and to their
care

care it is owing, that their exploits and those of the Craobh-Ruadh, have been so well preserved. As soon as a new government was established in a part of Ulster, in the fourth century, on the ruins of that great house, we find also a new chronicle to commence, under the title of the Book of Orgial, so called from the new name given to that territory, in which the exploits of these conquerors and their successors, with their pedigrees, are accurately noted down.

Besides these are the Book of Synchronisms, in which the provincial kings are synchronised with the monarchs of Ireland, and the Reim-Riogra, or Book of Reigns, which exactly notes down the number of years each of these monarchs governed. From these records principally, are almost all the other books and annals of the kingdom taken, with the genealogies of families. It is by their means that the Irish are enabled to trace their pedigrees, so much higher than other nations, and that, as Camden himself acknowledges, “The antiquities of every
“ other nation compared to that of Ireland, is but as if
“ of yesterday!” This unexampled protection afforded to letters, and care of their history and antiquities, made the Irish deem all the neighbouring states barbarous. In the life of St. Fiacre in the seventh century, on meeting his countryman St. Chilian in France, he thus addresses him. — “Quid te charissime frater, ad has barbaras
“ gentes

"gentes deduxit?" No wonder then if a people who traced their pedigrees from the Scythians and the Egyptians, the noblest races of antiquity, should glory in their ancestry, and look down with condescension and pity on the pretensions of other nations! If the histories of Britain, Gaul, and Germany cannot be traced higher than the fifth century, and that, beyond this æra, no traces, even of their princes, can be found, how absurd then attempting to carry the pedigrees of private families higher? But, in Ireland, not only the blood royal, but the genealogies of the entire Milesian race, have been carefully preserved, with the numbers of saints and illustrious men their principal families produced. It could not, from the nature of the constitution, be possibly otherwise, since rank and subordination depended on it. This reminds me of an anecdote that happened soon after the late war in Germany. The prince of Saxe Hilburghausen, being one day, in a large circle, descanting on the high antiquity of his house, and that his ancestors were dukes in the reign of Charlemagne, general O'Donnel (descended from Niall the Grand, monarch of Ireland in the fourth century) fatigued with his vanity, coolly answered, "*Mon prince, vous etez bien heureux d'avoir etre né en Allemagne*" — "*si vous etiez chez moi, à peine auriez vous, le droit de bourgeois!*"

xviii PRELIMINARY DISCOURSE.

The very names of territories, rivers, lakes, and mountains, and even the surnames of families, allude to different periods of our history. None durst impose arbitrary names on places or people. They were first to be proposed by the antiquarians, and approved of by the national representatives—at least by the literati—and these names, and the reasons why they were imposed, were entered into the national records. From these it is, that, even at this day, we know, for instance, why from Ealgnait, or Ealga, wife to Partholan, the first invader of Ireland, the country got the name of Inis-Ealga, or Ealga's island; and that after her children different lakes and mountains were called. The names of almost all the territories, rivers, and lakes, through the kingdom, are, in like manner, explained by our history. As to surnames, when first assumed in Ireland, they were not arbitrarily imposed, but with great taste and judgment, were directed to be taken from some illustrious ancestor belonging to the family, to which the epithets O' or Mac was to be prefixed, which implied the son or successor of such a man. Can the Greeks or Romans bring such proofs of the authenticity of their histories and antiquities? Had they men set apart, endowed with uncommon privileges and immunities, to attend to these great objects; and were their different accounts examined, from time to time, by committees

committees of the national assemblies? Josephus, in his Discourse against Apion, upbraids the Greeks for their shameful ignorance of early history and chronology, and accounts for it by observing, that they kept not public registers, nor had they hereditary antiquarians to superintend this department.—“Not so, says he, with the Phœnicians, the Chaldeans, and with us (the Jews), who have, from remote antiquity, *by means of registers, and the care of persons particularly appointed to this office, preserved our histories beyond all other nations.*” May not this retort of Josephus on the Greeks be, with equal propriety, applied by the Irish to the enemies of their high antiquity—*the only thing they have now left to boast of!*—And is it not a strong defence of our history after the same manner preserved? What authorities had Livy to ground his early history on? It is true, some mention is made of Pictor and Piso, and of registers kept by the high priests; but does not Livy himself confess, that almost all of these were destroyed by the Gauls, in their sacking of Rome, and by others? and yet, who doubts the veracity of this history, because some records must have undoubtedly remained? If we find the genealogies of our princes noted in the different reigns, is not the same method observed in the Bible, the historical parts of which were preserved by persons set apart for that office? Our princes appeared in battle with crowns of

gold on their heads; and such was the established custom among the Jews*. In the battle of Muirtheimne, fought before the Incarnation, in that of Magh-Lena, in other subsequent ones, to the death of Ceallachan and Brian-Boirumhe, it was usual for a prince or great commander to lament, in extempore odes, the loss of heroes slain in battle. Instances of this we frequently meet with, and yet the custom was not peculiar to Ireland, since we find it observed by the Jews also. Thus David makes a song of lamentation for the deaths of Saul and Jonathan †!

Too much pains cannot certainly be taken to prove the veracity of our history, and the certainty of our chronology, since both are capable of throwing such new and interesting lights on history and antiquity; and whilst I become thus a professed advocate in the cause of my country, I persuade myself *that I am pleading the cause of letters in general.* To pass by the *sunshine* which our history throws on that of the early Greeks, and other neighbouring nations, were we to consider that it is the only key to the Greek and Roman accounts of the religion, laws, and customs of the ancient Celtæ, that alone should intitle it to the particular attention of the literati of Europe. Cæsar's account of the constitution of Gaul, and

* 2 Samuel, chap. i. ver. 10. 1 Chron. chap. xx. ver. 2, &c.

† 2 Samuel, chap. i. ver. 17, &c.

the Druidical order*, are only reconcileable to reason and truth by recurring to Irish history; the Samnothei, and other orders of religious among the Celtæ, are, in like manner, elucidated by applying to the same pure fountain. But of all these matters I have already sufficiently descanted in the first part of my *Introduction to Irish History*. The moment the Romans could acquire any certain knowledge of Ireland, (which was in the days of Agricola) that moment they proclaimed its power and consequence. Tacitus tells us†, that her ports were then more resorted to by foreign merchants than those of Britain. By his relation the Romans seemed well acquainted with its value, and the great advantages they should derive by its acquisition. He even expressly declares the impossibility of keeping Britain in due obedience to Rome without the reduction of Ireland, the country which supplied the malcontents with the means of revolting on every occasion. From that period, to the dereliction of Britain, we shall behold Ireland the very soul of all the confederacies formed there against Rome.

Though Ireland constantly braved the power of Rome, yet we see, so early as the year 431, Palladius sent by pope Celestin as apostle—"to the Scots believing in Christ"—for so were the Irish then, and for many centuries

* Commentar. lib. vi.

† Vita Julii Agricol.

after,

after, called. The next year he consecrated Magonius, well versed in the Irish language, for that mission; and to add greater dignity to this embassy he created him a PATRICIAN--for a title, not a name, it undoubtedly was. Need it be told that this was an institution of Constantine the Great, much more honourable than that of the *patricii* of heathen Rome; and that several kings of France afterwards gloried in the title! Thus Ireland, exempt from Roman power, had Palladius, and after him Magonius, or, as he is generally called, Patrick, sent to Ireland early in the fifth century; whereas Britain, so long a Roman province, did not receive Augustine for a century and an half after! Long before this period our writers notice numbers of Irish Christians labouring to spread its tenets through the neighbouring states; and, soon after, all Europe proclaimed the erudition and piety of her sons, insomuch, that through them, the the nation, by *universal consent*, got the glorious and unexampled titles of INSULA SANCTORUM ET DOCTORUM! It was not enough that they sent their missionaries, and of the purest blood in the kingdom, to instruct, in letters and Christianity, the (then) barbarous circumjacent nations, but they opened for them colleges in different parts of the kingdom, on so extensive and generous a plan, that not only (says the Venerable Bede) were these strangers supplied with meat, drink, and lodging, *but*
even

even with BOOKS gratis *! They were, at this time, eminent in sculpture, painting and music, and possessed the sciences in an exalted degree! Could they have borrowed these from Rome? They had little connection with her. Would not the technical terms in arts and sciences favour of the country from whence they acquired them? They are all pure native Irish! But if the Romans gave arts and sciences to the Irish, why did they withhold them from the rest of Europe? Or why pitch on a people, as the conveyancers of them, so remote, and with whom they had no friendly correspondence? The truth is, Rome had not those arts and sciences, in an eminent degree, at this time; and the inundations of different enemies pouring into the empire will explain it.

If then Ireland, in these early days of Christianity, became so renowned for arts and sciences, that when a lettered man of Britain, or of the continent, was for any time absent, it became a common proverb—*Amandatus est ad disciplinam in Hiberniâ*!—Is it not a strong presumptive proof that she must have possessed them before this period, even though our histories had been silent on this head, which we see was not the case? But the truth is, our history is the only means left to

* *Histor. Eccles. Brit. lib. iii. cap. 27.*

arrive at any tolerable knowlege of the ancient state of Europe, and the true commentary to the Greek and Roman accounts of it. Modern visionaries tell us, that all Europe was in a state of barbarity till reclaimed and civilized by the Romans; and yet the early Greek writers confess, that from the Celtæ they borrowed many things, both in theology and philosophy, and even adopted the very terms of those people! Cæsar, from his own knowlege, proclaims the flourishing state of letters in Gaul, and the great immunities enjoyed by its literati.

As much have the moderns been in the dark with respect to the feudal government that prevailed over Europe. They have represented it as a barbarous custom, which originated after the destruction of the Roman empire; but it was certainly far removed from this. By the feudal constitution, places, honours, and employments were hereditary in certain families, and the knowlege of these ranks could only be preserved by letters. What government could bid fairer for durability than where subordination was established? and had we wanted other instances, the Irish history would sufficiently prove this; where we behold it to flourish from the reign of Heber to the decline of the twelfth century, including a space of 2437 years; and it continued in Thomond, and in parts of Conaught and Ulster to near the middle

of the last age !What a contrast between it and that of ancient Rome under her emperors ! There we behold often the vilest of the people, without regard to blood or rank, raised to the purple ! What were the consequences ? Intrigues, conspiracies, proscriptions, destruction of all subordination, and, in a short time, a final period put to the most powerful and extensive government in the world !

The feudal system, to demonstration, was neither barbarous nor impolitic : it was revived on the continent after the annihilation of Roman tyranny ; and this furnishes us with a strong proof how little the Celtæ were improved by the Romans, since neither their laws or customs were adopted by any of the nations subdued by them, which shews in what an abject state they were held. But though they endeavoured to re-establish that mode of government which their ancestors enjoyed in happier days, yet the destruction of their annals and literary foundations, made it impossible for them to bring it to that perfection, in which it flourished among a people unacquainted with such hardships. Such was the Irish nation ! Here feudal government flourished in full lustre, and arts and sciences were eminently protected. The crown was hereditary as to blood, but elective as to the person ; and this nomination was confined to the chiefs of the people. No female could be

vested with supreme command ; and the issue of the female line had no pretensions to the succession. Public employments of every kind were hereditary in families ; and no overt-act of the present possessor could injure the claims of his successors. People were set apart to attend to the genealogies and exploits of different great families, whilst an higher order took care of the actions and pedigrees of the blood royal. The literati preceded the nobility, and preserved always those privileges and immunities which Cæsar tells us the literati of Gaul possessed in his days. On the revival of letters on the continent, and the establishment of schools, we read that doctors in different sciences disputed *even with the equestrian order* for precedence, and it was in many instances granted to them. Has not this a manifest allusion to earlier periods ? About this time, the kings of France and emperors of Germany received the equestrian order before their coronations, and in Ireland a prince was incapable of command, who had not been entered into the military school at seven years old, and received the Gradh-Gaoisge, an order of knighthood, at eighteen ! Though it be universally agreed on, that the equestrian orders of Celtic Europe were not taken from the Romans, yet writers are by no means in accord as to their origin, some dating them from the Crusades, others from an earlier period ; but all in unison, that their commencement was after the destruction of Rome.

However,

However, Cæsar is positive that they flourished in Gaul in his days ; and three hundred years earlier Manlius got the surname Torquatus, from wearing the gold Torques of a Gaulish knight, whom he had killed in battle, and which our Irish knights, by public decree many centuries prior to this epocha, constantly wore !

Thus the laws and customs which prevailed in Europe in the middle ages, and which in some instances operate at this day, have a manifest allusion to remoter periods ; and the accounts which Cæsar and Tacitus have given, prove they have. But where shall we look for an elucidation of subjects so interesting ? not amongst succeeding Roman writers ; this people so much venerated in modern days have destroyed every other vestige of Celtic civilization ! But Ireland, free from the incursions of that rapacious and oppressive people *only* can illustrate by her history, their relations, and rescue the credit of Cæsar as a writer, from the specious objections of moderns. He says, that the letters and religion of the Gauls came from Britain, or more properly the British isles * ; and that in every thing but their Druid mysteries, they used a Greek letter. But most moderns, as if better acquainted with these matters than a living witness, affirm, that letters must have been rather brought

* De Bello Gallico, lib. vi. cap. 13, 14.

from the continent to the British isles ; though to prove the truth of the reverse we see Cæsar affirm, that, *even in his own days*, such as chose to excel in letters, repaired thither for farther improvement ! But, say moderns, in the days of Cæsar, Britain did not make a figure in letters sufficient to justify his assertion ; granted : yet we are not rashly to conclude that he advanced a falshood ; we should rather look for an explanation of the matter. Now Ireland and Britain from the earliest times, have been called the British Isles, so that the word Britannia may be as well taken for Ireland ; and if its history explains and justifies every thing advanced by Cæsar relative to this matter, why attempt totally to reject such authority ? That it does, upon a careful investigation of the matter, cannot be controverted *. Besides, we see how satisfactorily our annals account for what he says of the Gaulish letter being Greek ; as it appears that to our ancestors the Greeks were indebted for their alphabet. Thus Cæsar is in accord with Irish writers, that the learning and religion of the ancient Celtæ came from Ireland ; and to prove this, our history is the clearest comment upon what he and other ancients have advanced on the subject. And as on the revival of letters it is universally confessed, that Ireland was then the grand emporium of learning, we

* Introduction to Irish History, part i. chap. 2, 3.

may safely presume that had the continental annals of remoter days been preserved, they would confirm her claim, in as full a manner. Thus, Lucian tells us, that Hercules amongst the Gauls, was represented as an old man with a bald head and long white beard; that through his tongue were several fine gold wires, which were again fixed to the ears of the people, who seemed to follow him with pleasure. That by this they represented the powers of eloquence, not of strength; and on this account they called him Hercules *Ogmios*. Now when the reader shall be informed, that Ogham was the name of the ancient Irish hieroglyphic character, (and probably of the Gaulish too, the figure of which is exhibited in the present work), he will at once account for the Gauls calling their Hercules *Ogmios*. Again, Florus in his relation of the Allobrogian war, tells us, that amongst the captives who graced the triumph, Bituitus appeared in his silver chariot, and his arms of *different colours*, such as he fought with †. That the equestrian order in Ireland fought in chariots in early days our annals testify; that they did so in Gaul, Pausanias and Cæsar declare; and these chariots were highly ornamented with gold, silver, and precious stones. But what can Florus mean by the *discoloribus armis* of Bituitus? Metals were early

† Lib. iii. cap. 2.

worked:

worked here to great perfection ; and they took uncommon pains to ornament and enrich their arms. In the reign of the monarch Eochaidh, A. M. 2909, the art of staining swords and javelins, &c. of different colours, was first invented and brought into use, for which reason he was surnamed Faobhar-glass, or of the Green Edge, because his weapons were mostly of this colour !

Having endeavoured to remove from the mind of the candid and learned reader, those prejudices which malevolence and ignorance have so long thrown on the annals of Ireland, it remains that I should explain, why an history *so highly interesting to letters*, should not only be so little known, but be also so shockingly misrepresented to all Europe ! Amongst the ancients, Strabo, Pomponius Mela, and Julius Solinus, have drawn horrible pictures of the manners and customs of the Irish nation. But these same writers are in accord, that the country was as bleak and inhospitable, as the people were savage and barbarous ; so that their total ignorance of the nature of the climate, is the best apology for their misrepresentation of its inhabitants. Besides, Ireland was then, and always continued, the avowed enemy to Rome ; no wonder then, that her writers should regard her with an inimical eye.

At a very early period Christianity made a rapid progress in Ireland ; and on the arrival of Magonius, (or as he is generally called) Patrick, he found an hierarchy established,

established, which for a time seemed very unwilling to acknowledge his superiority. I strongly suspect that by Asiatic or African missionaries, or through them by Spanish ones, were our ancestors first instructed in Christianity, because their connections by trade were greater with these than the Romans; and because they rigidly adhered to their customs, *as to tonsure, and the time of celebrating of Easter*. I know some have advanced, that in these matters of discipline, the Irish differed from the Asiatics; but without attempting to examine farther into this matter, so uninteresting to the public, it is at least evident, that in these customs they differed from Rome, and that for more than two centuries after the death of St. Patrick, though in matters of doctrine and faith, both were in the most perfect unison! Add to this, that the Irish church preserved privileges and immunities peculiar to itself. Archbishops and bishops were appointed without consulting Rome; bishops were multiplied at the wills of the metropolitans; they consecrated bishops for foreign missions, and these missionaries, in many instances of discipline, opposed the mandates of Rome; as Columba in Scotland, Finian and Colman in England, Collumbanus, in France, St. Gall in Germany, &c. For more than five centuries after the death of St. Patrick, we scarce trace any vestiges of a correspondence between Rome and Ireland, and in this interval, in many instances, we find Rome looked upon several of our missionaries with a jealous eye.

Though these great immunities of the Irish church, were of the utmost consequence to the cause of Christianity, and contributed to spread its doctrine in a most rapid manner, particularly in North Britain, amongst the British Saxons, the Gauls, and the Germans, yet in the eleventh century, when paganism was totally abolished, these powers seemed too great, and to endanger the peace of the church. The Irish themselves were highly sensible of this; and councils and synods were held from time to time, in order to bring the church of Ireland to the same subordination to Rome, as those of every other part of Europe.

In the beginning of the twelfth century, the Irish archbishops made a surrender of their exclusive privileges to Rome; and measures were taking to prevail on the princes and nobility to give up their right of nomination to archbishopricks and bishopricks. St. Malachie, archbishop of Ardmagh, was a flaming advocate for papal power. In 1139, he took a journey to Rome, to consult with Innocent II. then sovereign pontiff, on the speediest means of forming a solid union between Rome and Ireland. He was received with marks of particular reverence, and, after some delay, was dismissed with instructions to prevail on the heads of the nation to surrender their different rights of nomination to bishopricks, into the hands of his holiness, and his successors, as the archbishops had already done their power of consecrating of bishops at will; and the better to bring
about

about this reformation he was appointed legate. Malachie was indefatigable in his endeavours to bring about this change (says his biographer St. Bernard), and succeeded so far, that in 1148, he prepared with ample powers for a new journey to Rome, to acknowledge her supremacy in spirituals, in the name of the kingdom, and to demand palliums for the Irish archbishops, but he died at Clareval in his way to Rome, in the arms of St. Bernard. On the death of Malachie, Christien bishop of Lismore, being appointed legate in 1150, repaired to Rome on the same embassy; and the following year pope Eugene sent cardinal Paperon to Ireland, to distribute palliums to the four archbishops, as a manifestation of the lasting union between Rome and Ireland. In 1152, the cardinal presented the palliums, in the presence of the monarch, the princes, and twenty-two bishops, besides five bishops elect, and numbers of abbots and dignified clergy, in the abbey of Kells, in Meath, with great pomp and splendour.

Four years after acts so solemn and public, the reader will no doubt be astonished, to behold a bull of Adrian IV. at the request of Henry II. of England, granting to him the sovereignty of Ireland, on conditions, that he extirpates vice, and establishes true piety, church discipline, and wholesome laws, amongst that uninformed people; and that he causes a penny to be paid annually

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out of every house. He will be more so, when he finds this bull confirmed by his successor Alexander III. in which the Irish nation are styled barbarians, and Christians only in name! No wonder then that *bulls*, which were not dictated by the spirit of truth, granted to a prince who seemed to be the least formed in the world for an ecclesiastical champion, and which made religion a pretence, to promote temporal interests, should have been at all times, even to this day, regarded by pious Irishmen as spurious. They were however published by Henry, in the life-time of Alexander, and soon after complained of by the Irish to his legate in Ireland, cardinal Vivian; they were printed by Baronius and other Roman writers, and the least doubt cannot remain of their authenticity!

But how account for proceedings so arbitrary, so unjust, and so unchristian? As these bulls are made the basis of all the charges so degrading to truth and to Ireland, we will endeavour to account for them. On the death of Malachie, St. Bernard, charmed with his piety and sanctity, set about writing his life. He informed himself minutely of the particular privileges of the Irish church; and being entirely devoted to Rome, the greater these appeared, the more feverely he inveighed against them. The power of consecrating and appointing bishops to new sees, he declared to be new and unheard-

heard-of; and the custom of preserving episcopacy hereditary in families, he pronounced to be *truly diabolical*! Hence, (said he), that corruption of manners, and relaxation of church discipline! But neither custom was new or wicked, since both existed from the days of St. Patrick, and both were sanctified by Rome! They continued in full vigour from his days, to the middle of the ninth century, during which period, Ireland, by the consent of all Europe, enjoyed the unrivalled title of *Insula Sanctorum*! They remained so to near the middle of the twelfth age, when Bernard declared them diabolical innovations! Not only were the consequences, which he draws from these privileges, false in themselves, but we see these very privileges entirely relinquished at the time he wrote this life! Nor was there at that time a nation in Europe farther removed from irreligion and barbarity than the Irish. Of this Cambrensis himself soon after gives us a remarkable instance *. Astonished at the outrages and excesses committed by *his countrymen*, he tells us, the clergy of Leth-Cuin held a synod at Ardmagh in 1170, to enquire what unexampled crimes the nation had committed against heaven, to bring on it so terrible a scourge as the present? After grave deliberation they concluded,

* Hibern. Expugn. lib. i. cap. 34.

that God permitted this judgment to fall on them, for the shameful custom so long established, of purchasing from the English their children and relations, and *thus converting Christians to slaves!* Without commenting on so puerile a reason, which from pious ecclesiastics, unacquainted with the ways of the world, may pass; I only introduce it here to proclaim the innocence of the people, when their own clergy, who must be best acquainted with their vices and follies, could find no greater crime to charge them with!

Pope Adrian was by birth an Englishman. It was a flattering circumstance to be solicited by an aspiring young prince, (as Henry was *in his days*), for the donation of a kingdom, which cost him nothing; and it was besides a full acknowledgement of the power assumed by Rome, of disposing of kingdoms and empires at pleasure. The charges made by Bernard on the Irish nation, were made the pretences for this donation, though we see they could not then have a possibility of existence; and one would be tempted to think that the ministers of Alexander, had also consulted Strabo, Mela, and Solinus, to glean materials for his bull! Soon after the publication of these bulls, Cambrensis, bishop of St. David's, attended the son of Henry II. to Ireland, and was employed to write some account of the country. He could only hope to make his court to his
master,

master, and to Rome, by villifying and misrepresenting the nation ; and when popes and sovereign princes had set the example, we could not expect, that a simple bishop, deeply interested in the same cause, (for many of his relations were amongst the new adventurers), would presume to more virtue than his betters ! The works of this writer had for centuries remained in the oblivion they so justly merited, till the year 1602, when Camden caused them to be printed at Frankfort, by which means his calumnies were spread over all Europe. But they did not pass uncensured ; and the learned Dr. Lynch, archdeacon of Tuam, under the title of Cambrensis Eversus, published a work, in which the ignorance, malevolence, and misrepresentations of this writer are so fully exposed, that he is since, by masters of the subject, never quoted as authority to be relied on. The refutation of this work, in which all the calumnies that had ever been published against Ireland, were collected in the strongest point of view, and in an animated style, one should think ought to be deemed the fullest vindication of the country ; and yet this writer, whose want of integrity and candour has been so clearly proved, is one of the principal evidences produced by ill-intentioned, and worse informed moderns !

The candid reader may perhaps think I have taken too much pains in thus tracing to their true sources, the
causes

causes by which this nation has been so unexampledly traduced, and misrepresented to all Europe ; but as our annals, properly considered, appear to me so highly interesting to letters, it seemed of the utmost consequence to remove the most distant appearance of doubt, as to their authenticity. And now for some account of the present work.

Though few people possess a greater affection and veneration for their native country, or have taken more pains to be early instructed in its history and antiquities, than I have in these of mine, yet I little thought that this knowledge would one day or another engage me to draw my pen in its defence. So far from it, that I will ingenuously confess, that my natural disposition was totally averse to such pursuits ; but, as the poet has it :

“ Si natura negat, facit indignatio versus ! ”

The duty I owed to MY MUCH NEGLECTED AND MUCH INJURED COUNTRY, superseded every other consideration, and determined me to publish *an Introduction to Irish History*. This work met with a more favourable reception than I durst have flattered myself with, not only in Britain and Ireland, but on the Continent ; and the Academy of Inscriptions and Belles Letres at Paris, have expressed their approbation of it, in terms highly honourable to the author.

author. Here I had resolved that my historical researches should end, but I found myself mistaken. Since that period other writings on the same subject appeared, in which ancient history, and modern hypothesis, are strangely assimilated. It appeared to me, that if some generous attempt at a General History of Ireland was not *speedily* undertaken, the annals of our country, *so important to letters, would be lost for ever*; as, at this day, few are found hardy enough to explore a subject so little countenanced and so long neglected. But who bold enough to engage in so arduous a task? That I have attempted; but could I have foreseen the tenth part of the labours and difficulties I had to encounter, in all probability it would never have appeared!

In pursuing this work I have by no means considered myself intitled (as most moderns have) to obtrude my own opinions in the teeth of antiquity, or to take infinitely more pains to contradict or explain away the sense of ancient authors, than to elucidate passages, liable to doubts or difficulties, in them. It is for this reason that, in treating of the Irish colonies antecedent to the arrival of the Milesians, I have not once hinted that they were British emigrants, because my authorities affirm the contrary. This necessarily led me into a defence of ancient history, and an enquiry into the state of ancient navigation. It is admitted, that in the fine arts, as
well

well as in most departments of science, the ancients, if they did not excel, at least equalled the most celebrated moderns. Not only sacred, but early profane history, proclaims the ancient state of navigation and commerce; yet because it is not quite clear that they applied the use of the magnet to navigation, our moderns will allow them but coasting voyages! Hence the source of the modern system of population, so subversive of truth, and so prejudicial to ancient history! We have lost the art of making glass malleable; and but lately the art of staining glass has been revived, yet no one doubts the existence of both formerly. Printing, gunpowder, and the use of the magnet in navigation, are said to have been known to the Chinese from the earliest periods, though to us modern discoveries; and as it is certain that many properties of the magnet were well understood by the ancients, we should suppose that its property of pointing to the north could not be overlooked. In a word, we would look much more modest and sensible in endeavouring to illustrate and defend ancient historians (except in things impossible or highly improbable) than in boldly contradicting (and that from reasons which probably *then* could not have existed) what they have asserted for truths. And this enquiry has enabled me to throw fuller and clearer lights on the ancient British colonies, and their very early history, than all the writers who have preceded me, united.

As to the particular voyages of our early ancestors, so carefully handed down from age to age, even to this day, there appeared to me nothing either improbable or impossible in them. I carefully examined the mutilated accounts, left us in the early histories of the nations which they then passed through, and have found new and unexpected lights thrown on them, and these have supplied me with further proofs in defence of ancient history.

As to the domestic part of our history, I have left nothing unessayed to gain every intelligence and every information on this head. Besides the numerous MSS. in my possession, and copies of whatever had appeared in print on the subject, I, both by letters to particulars, and by repeated advertisements in the Dublin papers, requested that such as were possessed of Irish MSS. would send the titles of them to Messrs. Bonfield and Young, merchants ; and that such as were wanted, would be purchased, or ample securities given for their safe return. With concern I mention, that neither my private solicitations, nor these public applications, were attended with great success ; but I am happy, on this occasion, to return public thanks to my gallant countryman, and learned friend, James Aylmer, Esq. colonel of the regiment of Ultonia, in the service of Spain, for several curious and interesting remarks. Gratitude

also calls upon me to acknowledge particular obligations to him, as he not only first recommended me to publish this work by subscription, but even procured for me above an hundred subscribers for it in Spain. To my learned friend Doctor Mac Kenna, titular bishop of Cloyne, and a successor worthy the great Doctor O'Brien, I am indebted for a copy of the Leabhar-Lecan, faithfully transcribed from the original in the Irish college at Paris. Doctor O'Cullinan, a clergyman of great erudition, residing at Mallow, has favoured me with a correct copy of the Reim-Rigra of Giolla-Caomhain, and of its continuation, by Giolla-Moduda. I am obliged to this gentleman also, for several interesting letters on Irish antiquities. As to the rest, whatever other MSS. are quoted in this work, are of my own procuring.

In treating of every particular reign, I have examined whatever had been advanced by different writers, either in print or manuscript, on the subject. Even Routh, Usher, Ward, Colgan, and other ecclesiastical writers, were explored for information; and I have rejected whatever seemed improbable or ill-founded. Frequent mention is made, in early days of invasions from Africa, and of transactions between our ancestors and these people. As no other people of Africa but the Carthaginians, were a maritime or commercial people, I began

began to suspect that these were the very Fomharaigs so often spoken of. I consulted their history, compared the æras in question, and satisfied myself, as I hope I shall the public, that my suspicions were well grounded. This explained and justified the extent of our early commerce, the improvements in arts and manufactures, the working of our mines of copper, lead, and iron, the great riches of the country, and the sources from whence they flowed! Besides their extensive commerce, for which the Carthaginians were so renowned, it is a known fact, that, in their wars with the Romans, they hired mercenaries, not only in Iberia and Gaul, but drew troops from the Atlantic isles. To illustrate this, we find mention made of the Fine-Fomharaig, or African legions, in our early records, who, I take for granted, to be Irish troops consigned to that service; and for this reason, that our bands in Gaul were called Fine-Gall, as, in a subsequent period, those in Scotland were called Fine-Albin, just as the Romans denominated their legions after the countries in which they served. But, to shew that there is something more than conjecture in what is here advanced, it evidently appears, that Carthaginian swords, found near the plains of Cannæ, and ancient Irish swords, so frequently met with, are, as to shape, size, and mixture of metals, so exactly similar, that the assay master of the mint,

who examined both, pronounced *that they were cast in the same chauldron* * ! To this let me add, that the Psalter of Cashill positively asserts, that Eochaidh, king of Munster, and afterwards monarch of Ireland, invaded Greece with a large fleet ; and this answers to the time of the famous sea-fight between the Carthaginians and Phocians. Our annals note the time that Joughaine the Great entered the Mediteranean with a powerful fleet, and it exactly accords with the period in which Hannibal, the son of Gisco, invaded Sicily. That they also aided the Gauls, in their invasions of Greece and Italy, will appear certain. In Gaul, but more particularly in Britain, they acted a most conspicuous part against the Romans ; so much so, that the Roman relations of these transactions, in many instances, become only reconcileable to reason and truth by the aid of our history. Their accounts of the invasions of Gaul in the fourth and fifth centuries, and the gradual progress of these invaders, and their Gallic associates, till they (the Romans) were finally expelled the country, agrees so exactly with our relations of the incursions of Criomthan, Niall, and Dalthi, successive monarchs in this period, that the reader must be struck with the lights which each history throws on the other !

* Governor Pownal's Account of some Irish Antiquities, read before the Antiquarian Society, Feb. 10, 1774, and afterwards published.

The ruin of the Roman empire gave peace to Europe; and, from this period, all our extramarine expeditions ceased. Ireland, however, on this occasion, exhibited an appearance, if possible, more glorious than the former, in labouring to establish arts, sciences, and piety where she had already *liberty*. Her missionaries crowded in shoals to Britain, Gaul, and Germany, and by their prayers and exhortations, but much more by their examples, converted thousands! These were not persons of mean birth or small capacities, but of the purest blood and clearest heads in the kingdom. They retired to the most sequestered and least cultivated parts of Britain and Gaul. They reclaimed and cultivated the land, lived by the produce of their own labour, and shared with the adjoining poor the surplus. Their diet was plain and simple, and their beverage the next limpid stream. They opened schools for the instruction of the people, and every hour was devoted to one pious duty or another! Bede is an unexceptionable witness of their zeal, piety, and charity, in Britain; and the Gallic records prove them not less so in Gaul. “Thro’
 “ the labour of their hands (says Mezeray) frightful and
 “ uncultivated deserts became soon converted to most
 “ agreeable retreats; and the Almighty seemed parti-
 “ cularly to favour ground cultivated by such pure
 “ and disinterested hands. Shall I mention (adds he)
 “ that

X “that to their care we are indebted for what remains of
 “the history of those days *!” Such are the people who
 have been painted by Hume, and others of his stamp,
 as a disgrace to Christendom, as a dishonour to hu-
 manity!

From this period, to the ninth century, Ireland was
 deemed, by universal consent, *the Athens of Europe*. Her
 schools and universities were opened for all the world,
 and from every part of Europe were they resorted to.
 Their beneficence was not confined to instruction;
 “They supplied these strangers (says Venerable Bede)
 “not only with meat, drink, cloaths, and lodging, but
 “*even with books, gratis!*” The fame of the university of
 Lismore alone must shew what must be the case of the
 other universities of Ireland, and which I have taken from
 Bonaventura Moronus †, a Tarentin born, in the first
 Book of his *Cataldiados*, or *Life of our St. Cataldus*,
 bishop of Tarentum, in Italy.

Undique conveniunt proceres, quos dulce trahebat,
 Discendi studium, major num cognita virtus
 An laudata foret. Celeres vastissima Rheni
 Jam vada Teutonici, jam deseruere Sicambrí:
 Mittit ab extremo Gelidos Aquilone Boëmos:
 Albi & Averni coëunt, Batavique frequentes,
 Et quicunque colunt altâ sub rupe Gebenas.

* Histoire de France, tom. i. p. 118.

† V. Ufferil de Britan. Eccles. Prim. p. 755.

Non omnes prospectat Arar, Rhodanique fluenta
Helvetios : multos desiderat ultima Thule.

Certatim hi properant diverso tramite, ad urbem
Lisimoriam, juvenis primos ubi tranfigit annos.

The depredations of the Danes highly injured, but did not destroy letters among us. They could not, because the entire kingdom was at no time under their absolute sway. Certain it is, that, among other excesses, many valuable works were destroyed by them, and others carried away. Application was made, in the late king's reign, to the court of Denmark, for Irish manuscripts, but none could be found; and Dr. Warner thinks * none were ever carried there. But we have strong proofs to the contrary; for Lombard, archbishop of Ardmagh, who flourished in the days of Elizabeth and James I. tells us, † that many volumes of Irish MSS were *then* in the royal library at Copenhagen: that the king of Denmark was so solicitous to have some of them translated, that, by his ambassador, he applied to Elizabeth to procure him some able Irishman for that purpose. Donatus O'Daly, a learned antiquarian, confined at that time, for his religion, in the King's-Bench prison, was pitched upon for

* Introduction to his History of Ireland.

† Analec̃ta, p. 562, 3, 4.

this business ; but, on a council being called, political reasons determined them to forbid it. Here we see a prelate of great learning and sanctity speak of this, as a public action well known to have happened in his own days. He also accuses English Governors of labouring to destroy, or carry away, every monument of antiquity to be come at ; and he particularly names lord Grey, in the reign of Henry VIII. Sir Henry Sidney, Sir George Carew, &c. He also laments the vast numbers of Irish MSS, so long shut up in the Tower of London, and consigned to oblivion : “ works (says he), if “ translated, would throw new and interesting lights on “ religion and letters !”

Whatever outrages were committed by the Danes, whatever injuries they had done to letters, were soon remedied by the attention and munificence of the immortal BRIAN BOIRUMHE, and by subsequent princes. To explore the true cause of the destruction of our annals, and the shameful neglect of our history, we must look nearer home. From the first landing of Henry II. the English adopted a shameful policy, which was steadily pursued for many centuries. They laboured to represent the Irish nation, to all Europe, as a most barbarous and savage race of mortals ; and, at the same time, they left nothing unattempted to get possession of as many of their records as they could, which they

either destroyed or conveyed to Britain. From age to age quantities of vellum MSS. were sent out of the kingdom: they still lie scattered in their different public libraries; but no attempt has been ever made to inform the public of their contents! In the reign of Elizabeth, of James I. of Charles I. and II. and even to the Revolution, hereditary antiquarians, poets, lawyers, and physicians, were every where to be found well versed in their different professions, and highly capable of translating into Latin the works in their different departments; yet no measure was taken to further these good ends! On the contrary, to write in favour of Ireland, or Irish affairs, was deemed a proof of enmity to Britain; and this is the reason that all the works which were published in her favour during that period, were printed in foreign countries. Yet it evidently appears, that the early history and antiquities of Britain, can *only* be satisfactorily explained, by recurring to the history and antiquities of Ireland. I have in a former work taken uncommon pains * to elucidate this matter, and I flatter myself that the present one will prove to demonstration, how deeply interested British antiquarians and historians are in the preservation of what remain of our scattered annals. In what lights they will consider my laborious researches I am

* Introduction to Irish History, particularly part ii. chap. 8.

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only to conjecture; but I think, that I may with some confidence affirm, that few have taken more trouble, and no one has been more successful in investigating the early history and antiquities of Britain than I.

In every century, from the days of St. Patrick, I have given an account of the state of letters, and the different writers of Ireland. In this enquiry I did not trust to Harris, though a valuable performance*, much less to Nicholson §; but carefully consulted not only Usher, Ward, Colgan, &c. but Dupin, Fleury, and other foreign writers. The reader will plainly see, that I did not impose this painful task on myself merely to shew the flourishing state of arts and sciences, in these days of *freedom and independence*. Objects of an higher nature actuated me: my wish to throw some further lights on the state of religion, laws, and letters in the middle ages!

I have been obliged to put down the Irish quotations through this work, in English characters, as no Irish type was to be had in London; and this necessarily impels me to request the reader's indulgence for some errors of the press, my situation rendering it absolutely impossible for me to attend to such matters. As I have touched on this subject, it is proper that I should attempt to re-

* Writers of Ireland.

§ Irish Historical Library.

move the difficulties attendant on pronouncing the many Irish names which unavoidably occur in the course of this work. Our alphabet contains but seventeen letters, of which number five are vowels. The consonants are divided into mutables and immutables. The mutables are nine, six of which, by an adventitious H change their native sound, as B, C, M, P, S, T, whilst D, F, and G, by the addition of an H, yield scarce any sound. An H after a B, or M, causes them to sound like a V, as Abhran (avran), a song; amhas (avas), a soldier. The sound of C before an H, cannot be easily described, so it may be pronounced as it is read. An H after P, gives it the exact sound of an F; and after S and T, they sound as an H only. The other letters, viz. D, F, G, yield no sound. For instance, Seadhna a man's name, should be pronounced Seana, Lughadh, Lua, and so of words with F before H. The immutables or these consonants which in no instance lose their native sound, are L, N, and R. By observing these few rules, easily attainable, the mere English reader will find little difficulty in reading and pronouncing with tolerable ease to himself, Irish words as they occur.

However ambitious I have been to rescue my native history from the hands of ignorance, and to draw it forth from that oblivion, to which it had been so long

and so shamefully consigned, yet I am not conscious in any single instance of aiming to do it, at the expence of truth. Of all the Scythic and Celtic states of ancient Europe, Ireland alone has preserved her history and antiquities pure and uncorrupted; and what renders them of more universal value, is, that they evidently appear to exhibit an epitome of those laws and customs, which then every where prevailed. If the works of Cæsar and Tacitus, are justly held in the highest estimation; and that more for the lights they throw on the manners and customs of the Britains, Gauls, and Germans, in their own days, than for their mere historic merit, which however is very high; how much more to be prized should not a work like the present be, which is not only the true comment on these writers, but also exposes the real state of Europe, from the remotest antiquity, even to the twelfth century? in confidence that it will be considered in so interesting a light, I offer it to the public.

A work upon so extensive a plan, in the most masterly hands, could hardly be expected to be perfect; how much less so, in those of a person, who can be only accountable for the talents which the Author of nature has given him; and whose vocation must, in many instances, prevent him from paying that close attention to style and

and manner, which the reader may expect. For inaccuracies of this kind, when met with, he requests a favourable indulgence: for errors as an historian, he has none to expect.

Limeric,
Jan. 12, 1778.

S. O'HALLORAN.

and manner, which I have expected. For in-
 curacies of this kind, which meet with, he requests a fa-
 vourable indulgence: for errors as an historian, he has
 none to expect.

R E A D E R.

THOUGH the last chapter of this history con-
 tains the ancient name of territories and lands
 in an alphabetical order, and by what families possessed,
 which may serve as a reference to the reader in most in-
 stances, in the course of this work; yet for his greater
 ease, the following expressions, which often occur are
 here explained.

Clana-Baoisgne, the knights of Leinster, so called
 from this Baoisgne, ancestor to the famous general
 Fion-Mac-Cumhal.

Clana-Deaghadh, the knights of Munster, so called
 from Deagadh, of the Ernain race, who introduced a
 new discipline amongst them.

Clana-Morni, were the Conaught knights, who were
 so called from Morni, father to the renowned hero Goll.

Curiathe-na-Craobh (or rather Crobh) Ruadh, were
 the knights of Ulster—the words Curiathe-na-Craobh-
 Ruadh, literally signify the knights of the Red Branch;
 but I am inclined to think it should have been wrote
 Crobh-Ruadh, or of the Bloody Hand, being the en-
 sign of these heroes.

Dal-

Dal-Ccas, or (as it is pronounced) Dal-Gas, the posterity of Cormoc, called Cas, or the Well-beloved, second son to Olioll-Olom, king of Munster, from whom all the great families of North Munster, or Thomond, are called Dal-Gas, or Dal-Gaffians.

Dal-Riada, the posterity of Cairbre-Riada, as well in Scotland as in Ireland.

Degaids, or Ernains of Munster, the names given to a tribe who, about a century before Christ, got large possessions, and became a great people in Munster. They were named Degaids from their leader, and Ernains, from their first settlement about Loch-Erne, in the North.

Eoganachts, the posterity of Eogan, eldest son to Olioll-Olom. From him all the great families of Desmond, or South Munster, are called Eoganachts.

The Heberians, the descendants of Heber, eldest son to Milesius.

Heremonians, the issue of Heremon, youngest son to Milesius.

The Irians, or Irian race, so called from Ir, fifth son to Milesius.

The Ithians, or race of Ith, so called from Ith, son to Breogan, who was grandfather to Milesius. They are named Clana-Breoguin, or Brigantes.

Leath Cuin, the northern half of Ireland, so named from a famous partition treaty, made in the second century,

tury, between Con of the Hundred Battles, and Eogan the Great, king of Munster.

Leath-Mogha, the southern half of Ireland, (a line being drawn from Dublin to Galway). It was so called from Mogha, one of the surnames of Eogan.

Milesians, the name by which the ancient Irish are generally distinguished from those of later periods. In the native Irish they are called Clana-Miledh, or the posterity of the Hero. His real name was Gollamh, but, as a mark of pre-eminence, he was mostly called Miledh-Espaine, or the Hero of Spain; hence Milesians. He was the father to Heber and Heremon, who conquered Ireland in the year of the world (according to the Hebrews) 2736.

THE

THE
HISTORY
OF
IRELAND.

BOOK I.

CHAP. I.

The means by which the very early periods of Irish history have been preserved—the landing of Partholan and his followers in Ireland—a colony from Africa said to have preceded them—the number of lakes and rivers then found in Ireland, with a remark—names of some places, why imposed—death of Partholan, and extinction of this people.

IN the year of the world, according to the Hebrew computation, 2736, in the month of Bel or May, and the 17th day of the moon's age, according to the relation of Amhergin, high-priest to this expedition*, Ireland was invaded by a numerous body of select troops, from Galicia in Spain. After subduing the country, and establishing their government on a permanent basis, as shall be related in its place, they set on foot an inquiry into the history and antiquities

* Leabhat Lecan.

of the people thus reduced, how long they had been in the kingdom, and what colonies had preceded them, &c. The result of their researches produced the following relations, which have been as carefully transmitted from age to age, as those of their own particular exploits, and these of their ancestors.

In the year of the world 1956, Partholan, the son of Seara, the son of Sru, the son of Easru, son of Framant, son to Fathochda, the son of Magog, son to Japhet, the son of Noah, landed in Ireland, accompanied by his wife, Ealga, or Ealgnait, his three sons, Rughruidhe, Slainge, and Laighline, with their wives, and 1000 soldiers†. The Book of Invasions, from which this relation is taken, fixes the time of his landing to be 278 years after the flood; but Mr. O'Flaherty makes it 35 years later‡; differences, however, of little consequence in transactions so remote and uninteresting. The cause of his flying from his native country, Greece, we are told, was, the inhuman murder of his father and mother, with a resolution to cut off also his elder brother, in order to possess himself of the supreme command; but his parricide and villany were so universally detested, that he was compelled to fly the country, and seek new abodes, and at length, as we see, with his followers reached Ireland. The Book of Conquests mentions—but as an affair not authenticated—that before the arrival of Partholan, Ireland was possessed by a colony from Africa, under the command of Ciocall, between whom and the new comers a bloody battle was fought, in which the Africans were cut off.

It is recorded, that at this time, there were found in Ireland but three lakes and nine rivers, whose names are particularly mentioned; but from this it appears probable that the parts of the country, in which these lakes and rivers appeared, were *only* what were then known; and that as their successors began

† Gabhail Phartholan ar Eire.

‡ Ogygia, p. 10, 163.

to explore and lay open other parts, the rivers and lakes then appearing, were entered into the national annals, as they were discovered; but as no previous mention could have been made of them, and that the different periods in which they were found out, were distinctly marked, succeeding annalists, have dated the first bursting forth of each, from the time of its discovery. Our writers are very exact in the times in which these lakes and rivers appeared: it cuts a conspicuous figure in our history, and proves the extreme accuracy of our early writers; but a very unjustifiable credulity in their successors, who could suppose the first discovery of them to be their first rise, though the learned Dr. Hutchinson, bishop of Down and Connor, has taken no small pains to defend it*. But as it appears to me almost a certainty, that (with a very few exceptions) rivers and lakes are nearly coeval with the creation, the reader will I hope excuse my taking no farther notice of this part of our history.

Soon after the landing of Partholan, his son Slainge died, and was interred in the side of a mountain, in the present county of Down, from him denominated Sliabh-Slainge, sliabh being Irish for a mountain. Laighline also died, and was buried near a lake in Meath, from him called Loch-Laighline; and from the the place of Rughraidhe's interment, the adjoining lake was called Loch-Rughraidhe. After a reign of 30 years, Par- 1986
tholan quitted this life, at Magh-Alta, in Meath, leaving the kingdom between his four sons, born in Ireland, whose names were Ear, Orba, Fearn, and Feargna.

We are surpris'd to find in the retinue of this prince, four men of letters, three druids, three generals, a knight, a beatach or keeper of open house, and two merchants, whose names are preserved in our annals. The sons of Partholan we are told, governed with great wisdom, as did their successors for some

* Defence of ancient Historians, &c.

generations, till at length a violent plague broke out, which swept away the greatest part of this colony. By this means the kingdom, which for near 300 years was governed by the posterity of this prince, continued for thirty years after in a state of anarchy. The greatest number that were carried off by this contagion, was at Ben-Hedir, now Hoath, near Dublin, and the places adjacent; from which circumstance, we may infer, that it was brought into the kingdom by some ship or ships: the mortality was so rapid, that experience pointed out the utility (instead of different burial places, which only served to spread the disorder) of fixing on one common place, in which the dead were to be thrown indiscriminately; and which from this circumstance, says the Book of Conquests, was ever after called Taimhleacht-Muintir Phartholan, or the burial-place of the posterity of Partholan. After the reception of Christianity, a celebrated monastery was founded on this ground, to this day called Taimhleacht.

C H A P. II.

The arrival of the Neimbedians, or second colony, in Ireland—their different battles with the Africans, till their final defeat—quit the kingdom in three divisions, two of which sail to Greece, the third to Britain.

2286 **I**T appears that Partholan did not bring with him to Ireland, all his family. An infant son remained in Greece, called Adhla; and Neimheidh, his successor, after many generations prepared, with a large fleet and army, to follow the fortunes of his lineage in Ireland. This armament consisted of 34 ships, and 30 persons in each ship, besides his wife Macha, and his four sons, Starn, Iarbhanel the prophet, Feargus, and Ainnin.

An

An African colony had been settled in the North, long before the arrival of the Neimhedians, who were far from being so barbarous as represented. It is recorded that Neimheidh had employed four of their artizans, to erect for him, two sumptuous palaces, which were so highly finished, that, jealous lest they might construct others on the same, or perhaps a grander plan, he had them privately made away with, the day after they had completed their work! a manifest proof at which side the barbarity lay*! Soon after this, Macha, the wife of Neimheidh, died, and from the place of her interment, it took the name of Ardmacha, or Macha's eminence. The Fomharaigh, or Africans, jealous of the Neimhedians, prepared to engage them in battle; they met near Sliabh Blama, in Leinster, again at Ros Fraocain, in Conaught, and a third time near the Tor Conuing, the principal settlement of these pirates, in all which battles the Neimhedians were victorious. But a fourth engagement taking place by mutual agreement, at Cnamhrius, in Leinster, the Neimhedians were entirely defeated; and among the slain were the son and nephew of Neimheidh: shortly after, this prince himself died of grief and disappointment.

The Africans began now to lord it with a high hand over the poor remains of these adventurers; they imposed heavy taxes on them, which they were obliged to deliver in every first of November, at a place called from this tax Magh-Geidhne, or the Plain of Violence, in the North. But as violence and severity are not the means to reconcile a vanquished people to their fate, the chiefs of the Neimhedians conspired, and the oppressed poor were ready to engage in any attempt, how desperate soever, to recover their liberty. The principal conspirators were, Fathach, and Fergus, surnamed Leath-Dhearg, or Red-side, sons of Neimheidh, and Beothach his grandson; besides these, they had three heroes:

* Gabhail Neimheidh ar Eirín.

of especial note with their followers, men whose approved courage inspired the highest confidence in the whole party. They soon fought for, and engaged the Africans, with a resolution equal to the desperateness of their affairs; in this battle Conuing, the son of Faobhar, the African chief, with most of his troops were slain, and their principal garrison Tor Conuing levelled to the ground; soon after this, More, the son of Dela, who had been absent with his fleet, endeavouring to land in this northern quarter, (an island in the present Tir Connell,) was opposed by the Neimhedians, but, after a bloody conflict, these last were defeated with great slaughter, such as escaped the sword perishing in the water.

The affairs of the Neimhedians became more desperate than ever. They had no alternative, but to submit to the most abject slavery at home, or seek better days in other climes. The latter they choose; Simon Breac the son of Starn, son of Neimheidh, led a colony of them back to Greece; where it appears they only changed climates, not circumstances; being there cruelly oppressed by their relations: from this people are descended the Fir-Bolgs, of whom we shall treat in the next chapter. Jobhath, another grandson of Neimheidh, sailed to Greece also, as the Book of Invasions tells us, with his followers; and Briotan, the son of Fergus, son of Neimheidh, with his people landed in North Britain, from whence his posterity gradually extended themselves more to the southward: the few that remained behind were cruelly oppressed by these Africans, till the landing of the posterity of Simon Breac, to which time no traces of history are met with. Writers are not agreed as to the time in which this colony ruled Ireland: Mr. O'Flaherty * makes their residence here to be 216 years; but this cannot be reconciled to reason and chronology, since we have seen, that the grand-children of this Neimheidh

* Ogygia, 170.

quitted the country; so that if we allow 100 years for this space of time, it is as much as in reason can be demanded; add to this, that Giolla Caomhain † affirms, as does the Book of Invasions and Psalter of Cashell, Keating, Lynch, &c. that from the landing of Neimheidh, to that of his successors the Belgæ Inghisive, was exactly 217 years; and yet Mr. O'Flaherty, by shortening the time of the Partholaniens remaining in Ireland, makes the rule of the Neimhedian colony there to last 216 years; and to reconcile the whole to his chronology, he fixes the coming in of their successors the Belgæ at 412 years later, contrary to every evidence of antiquity! In justice to the memory of this learned gentleman, I must observe, that the first mistake arose from an opinion that Neimheidh was grandson to Partholan; but to reconcile the accounts handed down to us from remote antiquity on this head, to reason, as we shall shew them reconcileable to sound chronology, we should (as I have done) rather suppose Neimheidh, though of the same line, to be some generations later.

Before I quit this article of Neimheidh, I must observe, that this prince cut down twelve large woods, and cleared the land for tillage.

† Reim-Riogra Giolla-Caomhain.

C H A P. III.

Of the Belgæ or third colony of adventurers, and their arrival in Ireland.—Their different appellations explained.—Of Slainge the first Irish monarch, and his successors, to the reduction of this People.

WE observed in the last chapter, that Simon Breac led the first embarkation of the fugitive Neimhedians to Greece, where they encreased greatly, insomuch as to become formidable to the natives; so that in their own defence they reduced them to a severe bondage. We are told, that, like the Israelites in Egypt, they were the hewers of wood and drawers of water to these people; that they were compelled to dig in the low deep soil, and carry this earth in leathern bags to cover and improve more barren places. And this let me add, is a striking proof of the wisdom and industry—I shall not say much of the humanity—of the people, who employed them; from this it is said, they got the name of Fir-bolgs, or Bag-men.

Though groaning under these severities, it appears they lived together; and the country which their ancestors were compelled to quit, they often discoursed of. It is not improbable but that some intercourse might be, from time to time, kept up between them and their friends in Ireland; but be this as it may, it is agreed upon by all our historians, that a considerable body of these people—no less in number than 5000—under five leaders, 2503 the descendants of Neimheidh, landed in Ireland, A. M. 2503. the names of these chiefs were Slainge, Rughraidhe, Gann, Geannan, and Seangann; their fleet was in three divisions. The first under the command of Slainge, landed in the Bay of Wexford,

ford, from him called Inbher Slainge, with 1000 men; for Inbher in Irish denotes a bay. The second, led on by Gann and Seangann, anchored at Inbher-Dubhghlaife, in the North, with 2000 men; and the third commanded by Geanann and Rughruidhe, at Inbher-Domhnain, in Conaught, with 2000 men more. They divided the kingdom into five equal partitions, according to the authority of a most ancient poet, quoted in the Book of Invasions *. Slainge the eldest, had to his share the province of Gailian, or Leinster; Gann and Seangann had the two Munsters allotted to them; Geanann the province of Conaught; and Rughruidhe that of Ulster.

The people themselves we find distinguished by different names: The Fir-Bolgs †, so called from the leathern bags, in which they removed the earth; the Fir-Domhnains, from their digging deep in the earth; from doimhne a depth, to which the word fir, or men, is joined; and Fir-gailean, or spear-men, from gaillain a spear, as their duty was to protect the workmen.

From this account we reasonably surmise, that the tale which the new comers gave of their sufferings, to their relations in Ireland, had more of policy than truth in it, in order to excite their compassion, and make their own reception more cordial. From it we should infer, that the country allotted to them in Greece to live in was very barren; that their own industry supplied this defect; and that their military guarded their frontiers from the incursions of barbarous invaders: this is certainly the natural induction.

Slainge the eldest, with the dominion of Leinster, assumed the title of monarch of the whole island; and this, as Giolla Coamhain and all our antiquaries agree, was the first king in Ireland. After a reign of one year he died, and was interred at

* Gabhail Fhear-Mbolg ar Eirion.

† Reim-Riogra Giolla Caomhain.

the side of a mount in Leinster, from him called Slainge. Rughraidhe was his successor, he ruled as monarch two years, and then gave way to his brothers Gann and Geanann, who directed the government for four years. Seangann was the next monarch; he swayed the sceptre five years, when he fell in battle, by the sword of Fiacha, called Cinn-fionnan, or of the Whitehead, the son of Rughraidhe. At the end of five years more, i. e. A. M. 2521, he met the fate of his predecessor, by the hand of Radhnal, the son of Geanann.

Radhnall reigned six years, and was slain in the battle of Craoibhe. His successor was Fiodhbhghean the son of Seangann; after a reign of four years, he fell in the battle of Muirtheimhne, in the county of Louth.

Eochaidh the son of Erc, the son of Radhnall, ruled Ireland for ten years in great splendor and glory; at the end of which time, a final period was put to his life, and to the government of the Belgian race in Ireland, by new invaders, whose history we shall recite in the next chapter. His queen was Tailte, daughter to the king of Spain; and the place of her interment still retains that name. All our antiquaries agree that the Belgians ruled Ireland but thirty-seven years, the learned O'Flaherty thinks it could not be less than * eighty; but I think it more judicious to adhere to the testimonies of antiquity, than to the conjectures of moderns, who cannot certainly have these opportunities of information which earlier writers must have possessed.

* Ogygia, p. 173.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Damnonii or fourth colony, and why so called—their travels from Greece to their landing in Ireland.—History of the Liagh-Fail—of the reigns of Breas, Nuadh, and Luigha.—Origin of the famous Aonach-Tailtin-Eochaidh, Dealbhaoith, Fiacha, and the three brothers, Eathoir, Teathoir, and Ceathoir, succeeding monarchs of Ireland, &c.

IN the year of the world 2541, and the tenth of the reign 2541 of Eochaidh, son of Erc, Ireland was invaded by a new colony, who were called Damnonii; they were also descendants of Neimheidh, by his grandson Jobhath, and, like their predecessors the Fir-Bolgs, fled to Greece, from the tyranny of the Africans, who so long lorded it over Ireland. Our antiquaries assign two reasons for their being called Damnonii, or Tuatha de Danans; the first to denote their descent from the three sons of Danan, the daughter of Dealbhaoith, son of Eahladh son of Neid. A second derivation is, that the people were divided into three classes; the nobility, who were so called from Tuatha, a lord; the priests from Dee, God, as devoted to the service of God; and the Danans who composed hymns, and sung the praises of the Supreme, from Dan, a poem. These people * quitted Greece on account of a mighty invasion from Syria, and after a variety of adventures, at length landed in Denmark, where they were received with great humanity by the people, who assigned them tracts of land to cultivate, and four cities to inhabit. In these cities were masters appointed to instruct the people in arts and sciences, and the names of these cities, or rather universities, as

* Gabhail Thuatha, D. D.

well as of the superintendants of them are yet preserved. After spending a considerable time in this country, but how long is not specified, they sailed for North Britain, under the command of Nuadh, twelfth in succession from Neimheidh. Here they remained seven years, when they invaded the northern coasts of Ireland, and, amongst other curiosities, brought with them the famous Liagh-Fail, or stone of destiny, on which all our succeeding monarchs were crowned, and on which the British princes have been inaugurated since the reign of Edward I. who had it conveyed from the abbey of Scoon. On the reduction of North Britain by Fergus the Great, the son of Earca, to make his possession of the country more solemn, he requested of his brother, the monarch of Ireland, the use of this stone to be crowned on; for it had been a received opinion, that in what country soever this stone should be preserved, there a prince of the Scythian or Irish race should govern, according to the very old, though well known Rann, or verse.

Mar abhfaghad Liag-Fail, dlighead-flathus do ghabhail;
Cine-Scuit faor an fhine, munba breag an Fhaifdine.

i. e. "the Scots shall give law and rule to whatever country
"this stone is placed in, if the fates are to be credited." In respect to antiquity I have given this short account of this wonderful stone, which tradition has it, made a strange noise when any of the TRUE line of Milesians were crowned, but otherwise was silent. It still remains under the inauguration chair in Westminster Abbey, but by the name of Jacob's stone.

On the landing of the Danaans they set fire to their ships, to shew their people that they had no resources but in their courage; and, by the help of a very thick fog, got three days march of their enemies, before they had a certainty where they were; and
which

which incident they had cunning enough to impose on the people, to have been brought about by their skill in necromancy. Here they called a council, and sent heralds to the monarch Eochaidh, to resign the kingdom to them, or determine the contest in a pitched battle. The latter he accepted; and after a most bloody engagement, on the plains of South Muigh-Tuir-readh, in which he fell by the sword of Nuadh, who lost a hand in the contest, the whole Belgian army were routed, having left 10,000 slain on the spot. The remains of their scattered troops fled different ways, and retired to the isles of Arran, Man, Ila, to Britain and the Hebrides, waiting a more favorable opportunity to recover that country, which the fate of war deprived them of.

Nuadh, the chief of this colony, is not placed in the Book of Invasions, as first monarch of the Danaan race. We find his cousin Breas, proclaimed, and first inaugurated on their famous stone. The reason I conceive to be this: in these early days—and indeed in every succeeding period of Irish history—any corporal defect was a sufficient exclusion from the monarchy. This Nuadh felt. We find his hand healed by the skill of Miach, his physician, and an artificial one of silver, exactly fitted to the stump, by Credah his goldsmith, from which he ever after went by the name of Airgiod-laimh, or of the Silver-hand. Thus assisted, he reclaimed the monarchy as his right, to which we see Breas oblige to assent, after a reign of seven years. 2541

Nuadh, possessed of the monarchy, reigned twenty years; during this period, Breas ill bore the loss of the diadem. He entered into treaty with the Africans, who still held some places in the North. He sent emissaries to the exiled Belgians, who privately and by different parties, enter the kingdom; and now, at the head of a considerable party, he proclaims his right to the crown. Nuadh prepared his army to meet his antagonist. They engaged 2548

2568 engaged on the plains of North Muigh-Tuirreadh, in Conaught. The conflict was great and bloody; and we may judge of the carnage on both sides, by the chiefs that fell. Bale Beimionach, general of the Africans, the principal leaders of the Belgæ, and Breas, the soul of the whole, fell on one side; whilst Nuadh himself, Ogma-Grianan, and many leaders of the first rank amongst the Danaans, partook of the same fate. The Danaans however gained the well fought battle, and sorely oppressed the remains of the Belgæ for a considerable time after.

Luigha, surnamed Lamh-fhada, or of the Long-hand, a descendant of Neimheidh's was the next monarch. Besides his blood, the uncommon intrepidity he displayed in the last battle (having with his own hand slain the African chief) seemed to call him to this dignity. He ruled with great prudence; and, sensible of the utility of public shews and amusements, especially to a fierce military people, he instituted the Aonach-Tailtean, so celebrated in every subsequent period of Irish history. The origin of this famous assembly is thus delivered by our Senachies.

2569 Tailte, daughter to a Spanish prince, and the queen of Eochaidh, the last monarch of the Belgian line, who fell in the battle of South Muigh-Tuirreadh, afterwards married Deocha-Gharbh, one of the Danaan chiefs; and to her care and tuition, the present prince was delivered when very young. Being a lady of great wisdom, she acquitted herself of her charge to universal satisfaction; and to commemorate her name and his gratitude, he ordered solemn tilts and tournaments, every first of August, being the day of her death, at Tailtean, in Meath, the place of her interment. This great assembly was proclaimed fourteen days before, and continued fourteen days after the first of August; during which time, none who attended, were to be molested in their persons, or properties. From this institution, and from this prince, the month of August, is at this day called in Irish Lugh-nas, or, the anniversary

versary of Lugh, from whence the English word Lammas for August. It is recorded of this prince, that he was the first who introduced the use of cavalry into Ireland. From the people of Theffaly's being such expert horsemen, before their use was known to the neighbouring nations, arose the fable of the Centaurs. After a peaceable reign of forty years, this prince died, and was interred at Caondruin, now Uifneach, in West-Meath. Eochaidh, another branch of the line of Neimheidh, was the succeeding monarch. In some of our genealogies he is made brother to Breas, the first Danaan ruler, and it is generally agreed reigned near eighty years; but this cannot be reconciled to chronology. But the Book of Invasions clears this up, by calling him Ealathar, the son of Ealathaim; so that he was the nephew, not brother to Breas, and the length of this reign, by this means, cannot seem extraordinary. 2608

Dealbhaoith, grandson to Ogma-Grianan succeeded to the throne, which he filled ten years, when he was slain by his own son. 2684

Fiacha the wretched parricide, reigned ten years, and was cut off in the battle of Ard-Breac, by Eogan of Inbher-more, who pierced his body with a javelin. 2694

Mac Cuill, Mac Ceacht, and Mac Greine, the three sons of Carmada, son of Eochaidh, and last princes of the Danaan race, ruled Ireland alternately for thirty years. Their real names were Eathoir, Teathoir, and Ceathoir. We are told, the reason why the first names were imposed on them, was, because they adored different deities. That Eathoir worshipped a log of wood, hence the name Mac Cuill, from Coill, a wood. Teathoir revered a plow-share, and was called Mac Ceacht, from Cheacta, a plow-share; and Ceathoir adored the sun, and was therefore called Mac Greine, Grian being Irish for the sun. Such a story handed down from age to age, at the same time that it shews a justly censurable credu-

credulity, yet proves what little alterations or innovations were made in our annals. Our records agree that these Danaans were very learned; and we may venture to add, for those days, a very polished people. In their famous Liagh-Fail, we may trace the origin of inauguration; since all wise nations, for political ends, will surely endeavour to make it be believed, that the crowning their princes, is in itself a sacred act, to gain it the greater reverence with the public. This colony our annals declare, were the first who introduced the use of the sword, the spear, and the horse into war, in Ireland. Besides these military improvements, we find them a commercial and a maritime people. Oiribhsion, was noted for his extensiveness in trade; and from Mananan, who reduced the isle of Man, did it take its name. How absurd then to suppose the present ruling princes to adore a log of wood, or a plow share for a god? would the most ignorant African in Guinea be content with such deities? the plain and evident meaning of these names are; that the first prince, Eathoir, encouraged the building of ships and houses, hence Mac Cuill, as paying most attention to woods. The second promoted agriculture, hence Mac Ceacht, or of the plow; and the third being a devout prince, employed himself mostly in prayer and adoration, hence Mac Greine, or of the sun; the only chief deity worshipped by all polished nations of antiquity, and which the Irish in a particular manner adored, not only at the period in question, but in every succeeding one, to their conversion to Christianity. It is to be noticed, that the queens of these princes were called, Banba, Fodhla, and Eire, and which names from them, have been given to Ireland, but more especially the last, which it retains at this day.

In the year 2736 the sons of Milesius landed in Ireland and after much blood spilt (as will appear in its place), made a
com-

complete conquest of the kingdom, which their posterity governed, with great glory, for above 2400 years, under 171 princes, *all* the descendants of the royal line of Milesius!

C H A P. V.

Remarks on the preceding relations—source of historical systems—early emigrations, conducted not by land, but by water—supported by the authorities of Moses, of Josephus, and of Tacitus, &c.—ancient state of navigation.

THE preceding relations extracted, as we have seen, from the most respectable pieces of Irish antiquities, have been strangely and unaccountably commented on, not only by foreigners, but even by some of our modern domestic writers; and this detail, in itself so capable of illustrating the early periods of Irish and British history, as we shall shew, has only supplied them with pretences and arguments, to weaken the authority of the subsequent parts of our history. For, say they, if tales such as these are to be obtruded upon us for history, what can we suppose the remainder to be, but *ejusdem farinae*! But the Milesian Irish transmitted them to posterity, on the faith of the people they subdued, and for the authenticity of which they could be no way responsible. To bring our annals into disrepute, they should attack those parts which relate to the exploits of our Milesian ancestors ONLY, not these which they could have no hand in. Nor have they had candour enough, to acknowledge the generous and liberal principles displayed by them on this occasion; who, *contrary to the barbarous principles of most other conquerors, ancient as well as modern*, instead of destroying every evidence, which

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might reflect honour on the legislation and politics of the people thus subdued, carefully transmitted them to posterity! Had the old Romans acted on such noble principles, what funds of knowledge and erudition should we now be possessed of!

To minds open to conviction, a stronger proof of the civilization of our early ancestors could not be offered, nor of the wisdom and extensiveness of their plan of government. The moment they found the ancient inhabitants of the country unable to injure them, that moment they ceased to consider them as enemies; and they only studied how to make them useful members of society. UNLIKE OUR MODERN LEGISLATORS, they laboured not to destroy and discredit their antiquities, *as if no glory could arise from the conquest of a brave and polished people*: they, on the contrary, transmitted to posterity, the genealogies, the exploits, and the principal actions of these people. But let us now consider how far these accounts may be supported; and, fabulous as they have been represented, what lights they may not be capable of throwing on early history, and particularly on that of Britain.

That spirit of Pyrrhonism, which the Reformation introduced, was not confined simply to religion; it affected the sciences! men now, accustomed to think for themselves, saw how genius was shackled by the subtilities of the schools; and philosophical enquiries obstructed by too implicit adherence to ancient dogmas. Had they confined their doubts within proper bounds, mankind would undoubtedly be the better and wiser for their enquiries; but certain barriers, as well in religion as in government, when once broke through, the future limits of either cannot afterwards be easily circumscribed. In this general rage of reformation, it appears to me, that history suffered not a little; since the authorities of ancient historians were as much called in question, as those of ancient divines and ancient philosophers. Thus, instead of adhering to the relations of remote annalists, the moderns have
freely

freely contradicted them, in many instances, and have opposed specious modern arguments to invalidate ancient facts. The strongest and the most dangerous instance of this innovation, is the PRESENT acknowledged system of population, and which at once destroys the credit of ancient history.

Population, says modern historic hypothesis, originating from the East, countries must receive inhabitants in proportion to their proximity to this great reservoir ONLY. Continents must necessarily be inhabited before islands, and these last, in proportion to their vicinity to those continents. Thus, Britain must be peopled after Gaul, the northern parts from the South; and from both, and after both, Ireland; and as neither North or South Britain furnish any traces of history before the Roman invasion, Ireland must of course be involved in the same barbarous chaos, in spite of every evidence to the contrary! But for the sake of truth, and to endeavour to restore to history part of that dignity, which *conjecture*, has robbed it of, let us examine on what foundations, in reason and truth, this curious hypothesis is supported.

Moses tells us,* that by the posterity of Japhet, “the isles of
“the Gentiles WERE divided in their lands; every one AFTER
“HIS TONGUE, after their families, in their nations.” Now all the interpreters are unanimous, that the isles of the Gentiles mean those of Europe; and to such as may dispute the *divine* authority of this legislator, I shall observe, that on this occasion I shall introduce him as an historian only, recording a fact well known in, and before his days; and a more respectable one antiquity cannot surely produce. Here then, to *demonstration*, we see the European islands inhabited by different people, and speaking different languages, LONG BEFORE the year of the word 2453, at which time Moses conducted the Israelites out of Egypt.

* Genes. chap. x. ver. 5.

He even shews, contrary to modern visionaries, that the separation of these different septs, did not proceed from too great an increase of inhabitants; because it happened at so early a period after the flood, i. e. in the days of Phaleg, that it could not possibly be the case. Immediately after the flood, Noah is commanded to be fruitful, to multiply, and to replenish the earth! The moment the confusion of languages began †, that moment did they begin to scatter and disperse over the face of ALL THE EARTH! though we should not even allow *inspiration* to this writer, yet, as philosophers, we surely must agree, that a better reason could no be assigned for the dispersion of mankind, than diversities of languages. The earlier we admit of the difference in tongues, the earlier we must acknowledge the necessity of mankind's separating. Could this be effected easier by land than by water? it undoubtedly could not: immense woods must be cut thro', rivers passed, and still greater dangers, from the unknown tracts, apprehended. How would women and children, subsistence, &c. be conveyed? but what space of time would it not take, to fill the continent, without noticing islands? and yet it is evident, that these last were peopled before it was possible for the continent to be overstocked, *if it ever was*, which I much doubt. We know, that for three and four centuries past, European colonies have emigrated to different parts of the globe; that these settlements have been effected by ships; and that in ALL these instances, a redundancy of inhabitants was never pleaded as a pretence. Curiosity, interest, or convenience, stimulated the first people, and their success encouraged other adventurers. But besides the evidences of Moses and of reason, we have others to offer in defence of truth and antiquity.

† Gen. ch. xi. ver. 8.

Josephus * is positive that the posterity of Noah passed by sea to many places ; and indeed it were hard to say, how else they could be conveyed. Tacitus † is so clear in the necessity of marine emigrations, that he gives as a reason why the natives of Germany must have been aborigines of that country (and the continent too) the impossibility of early navigators venturing into so tempestuous and swelling a sea ; for says he, “ the first settlers, “ travelled not by land, but went in fleets.” Must we not grant that they had better opportunities of information, than we modern speculists, so very many ages after them ? The ancients, less pre-occupied with absurd opinions of lazy philosophers than the moderns, gave free scope to clear sense and reason. The facility of conveying themselves from place to place by means of water, must have struck the most ignorant people, from the bare floating of timber ! the spreading of their cloaths must have pointed out to them the means and advantages of collecting of wind ; and a very little experience must have shewn them how to weather points, and double capes and head-lands. We know, from remotest antiquity, that the poor on the sea coasts of most countries used boats made of wicker baskets, covered with cow-skins, in which they braved the most tempestuous seas ; and such are at this day successfully used in the West of the county of Clare. If then poor and uninformed people, incapable of procuring better materials, have performed voyages, and successfully crossed the seas, in such wretched vehicles, ‡ what must not be effected by persons of more refined sense, and extensive power ?

Whether the early ancients understood the use of the compass in sailing, I shall not enquire, though confidently affirmed by some moderns ; and that this, with the purple die of the Tyrians, the malleability of glass, &c. were afterwards lost. Nothing however

* Lib. i. cap. 5, &c. † De Morib. Germ. ‡ Trias Thaumak. passim.

can be fuller than the proofs they offer of sea expeditions ; witness the Phœnician commerce ; witness the mighty fleets of the Egyptian Sesostris, whom chronologists have placed earlier by near three centuries than the taking of Troy. One of these armaments, antiquity affirms, sailed through the streights of Babel-Mandel, from the Arabian Gulph, to India ; and, doubling the Cape of Good-Hope, returned through the Streights mouth and the Mediterranean sea. We see long before the days of Homer, the European islands well known to the Greeks ; how else could he introduce Ireland into the *Odyssæy*, as we see he has, and determine its distance to be about ten days sail from the Streights ? In the days of Solomon, voyages to India were frequent, and we find took three years. If then the ancients knew not the use of the compass, they certainly must of some other instrument equally useful, besides the polar stars at night, and the sun in the day. All which collected, must given an air not only of possibility, but of probability to the foregoing relations.

But, besides the above proofs, plain sense and reason should point out to us the dangers attending on modern hypothesis in history. “ In many instances (says Bayle) historical truths are “ not less impenetrable than physical ones : ” because we cannot satisfactorily explain many phænomena in nature, must it follow that the facts are also to be rejected. What avails it, that in considering the *days of old, the years of many generations*, Moses recommends us “ to enquire of our fathers, and they will tell us : “ consult our elders, and they will shew us ; ” or, that Cicero should declare, that “ history is the witness of times past, the height “ of truth, the life of memory, the guide of life, and herald of “ antiquity ”.—Behold modern visionaries oppose their lazy indigested reveries to the evidence of antiquity ! And if any thing can more fully justify the necessity of these remarks ; it is the attempts

tempts lately made by the two Mac Phersons *. These men have laboured to establish a system of Scottish history, contrary to the voice of antiquity, and even to the evidence of modern times; and of two distinct people at this day speaking different languages, and till about thirty years ago governed by different laws, to make, from all antiquity, but one nation—I mean the Picts and Scots! Thus encouraged by the success of modern historical theorists, they have boldly thrown off every restraint, and even the appearance of respect to ancient facts, though affirmed by so respectable a writer as the Venerable Bede, and of facts he speaks to, from his own knowledge!

C H A P. VI.

The Britons early in possession of letters—their supposed fabulous history explained—annals of Ireland—Lluid's Hypothesis examined, and the close affinity between the Welsh and Irish proved—evidences that the first British colonies passed from Ireland—a mistake of Bede's corrected, and the ancient name of Brittany pointed out.

WHEN Cæsar † tells us, that the Celtic arts, religion, and letters, originated in the British isles, or rather in Ireland ‡; and that even in his own days, such on the continent as chose to excel in them, repaired directly to us—to deny such people the early use of history, must be highly absurd. Annals the Britons must have undoubtedly had in his days, as well

* Dissertations on the ancient Caledonians, &c.—Introduction to the History of Great Britain and Ireland.

† Comment. lib. vi.

‡ Introduction to Irish history. p. 1. c. 2 and 3.

as the Gauls ; though Cæsar is silent on this head with respect to both. It cannot be denied, but that the Roman policy was, whilst they introduced their laws and customs amongst the people they subdued, they at the same time laboured to destroy every vestige of the former state of such people ; so that, absorbed in veneration at the power of their conquerors, they forgot their own abject state. The earliest writer of British history on record, is Nennius, an author of the 7th century. His work I have not seen ; but it is agreed upon, that from it Geoffry, archdeacon of Monmouth, a Benedictine monk, and afterward bishop of St. Asaph, in the 12th century, took the principal materials for his history of Britain. And yet this work, fabulous as it has been deemed, when compared with the preceding relations, will shew, that the Britons retained some faint traditional memory of their real origin ; but, like the Scots in the reign of the first Edward, when they attempted the outlines of their history, so deformed it with absurdities and anachronisms, as to make it appear rather a romance than an history. It is the peculiar glory of Irish history, to be able with precision, to illustrate the history and chronology of other nations. In this chapter we shall confine our enquiries to that of Britain. In the next book we shall shew what the Greeks and Egyptians, &c. owe to our ancestors ; and these annals, which Hume, and others of his stamp, have so infamously misrepresented, far from appearing an heap of indigested falsehoods, will I trust be acknowledged as the *corner-stone* of true history and true chronology.

Geoffrey tells us, that Brutus, who first landed in Britain, was obliged to fly his country for parricide, impatient to succeed his father before his time ; and our annals inform us, that Partholan fled from Greece to Ireland for a similar crime ! he says, from this Brutus Britain took its name ; and our antiquaries are *unanimous*, that it was so called from Briotan, the son of Fergus !

Llhuid the best informed antiquary in Britain, and the properest
 judge of the matter, because a master of the old Irish as well as
 old British, ‡ confesses, “ that the most ancient names of places,
 “ rivers, mountains—and we may add of cities too—in Britain,
 “ are pure Irish; that both the Welsh and Cornish are replete
 “ with Irish, nay that they are nearly of the same genus: and
 “ that part of many of their compound words are pure Irish.”
 To account for these facts, he has formed an hypothesis—for as
 such *only* he offers it—finding the Irish called Gadelians, as well as

Scots,

Scots, he presumes the Gadelians were a branch of the ancient Celtæ, inhabitants of Britain, and who retired to Ireland to make way for new invaders; and that the names of these places, such as they found them, these last retained. But though this may be received with regard to the names of the places, yet it will never explain, why these new settlers should retain in their tongue so much of the Irish language. Besides, Mr. Llhuid in the dedication of his Welsh Dictionary to his countrymen, strongly recommends to them the study of the Irish language and history; nay he affirms—"that it is *clear*, that the Irish language is *absolutely* "necessary to these who would write of the isle of Britain." He has not once asserted, that the British is a necessary help to investigate the antiquities of Ireland! He also declares, "that he "could have no reason to doubt, but that the Gadelians (the Irish) "had formerly lived all over this kingdom." The very learned bishop of Cloyne * embraces this hypothesis of Llhuid; and he even attempts to demonstrate mathematically the time of the emigration of the Gadelians to Ireland, from the difference in language between the old Britons and Irish. Thus the Highland Scots became a distinct people from Ireland, or the mother country, suppose 1000 years ago, though the emigrations began much earlier; and if we grant, that the affinity of the Highland Erse with the Irish language, be in the ratio of three to one, with the affinity between the Welsh and the Irish—then, the quantity of time elapsed since the separation of the Welsh and Irish should be in the inverse ratio of three to one, with the former; so that fixing at a medium, the separation of the Highlanders from the Irish, at 1000 years; that of the Welsh from the Irish, must be at 3000 years; and which approaches very near the time pointed out by our historians, for the first invasion of Britain!

* Preface to O'Brien's Irish Dictionary.

But

But besides the close affinity in languages, between the old Britons and old Irish, their customs, manners, and inclinations, seem to indicate them originally *one people*. The Welsh, like the Irish, are brave, humane, and hospitable; glorying in the nobleness of their ancestry, and great lovers of music and poetry. Their ancient form of government was according to the Irish modus; and to us their bards and musicians repaired for instruction*, hence that elegant alliteration in their poetry, and hence that softness and harmony in their music, and their particular attachment to the harp! Mr. Warton tells us, that so late as the 11th century, “the Welsh bards received their instructions in Ireland, and brought with them to Wales, *divers cunning musicians, who devised in a manner all the instrumental music that is now used there, as appeareth, as well by the books written of the same, as also by the names of the tunes and measures used amongst them to this day.*”

Here then is every reasonable evidence that can be demanded, that the old British and old Irish were from one common stock; the difficulty lies, which to determine to be the parent country. The best informed Britons, from conjecture ONLY, assert, that it is Britain; but to this many objections will lie. According to their theory †, the Gadelians, giving way to new invaders from Gaul, at length retired to Ireland. But did these invaders ALSO speak the Irish language? if they did, then must the first European settlers have a language in common, which, though asserted, no man of sense, at least none but an hypothetical historian, should credit. Again, if Britain was the parent country, how came it so much inferior to Ireland, in rank and power, in these early, as well as in subsequent times? In the days of Cæsar, Ire-

* Warton's English Poetry, Dissertation the 1st.

† Camden, Lhuid, Rowland, Whitaker, &c.

land was well known to the Romans ; and in those of Domitian * we see it the very soul of the British confederacies. Tacitus likewise confesses it much better known for commerce, and in the subsequent periods, till the dereliction of Britain by the Romans ; it is well known that Ireland was the primum mobile of all the attempts to expel the Romans that country. In the days of Christianity they supported the same pre-eminence. At the council of Constance, A. C. 1417, the English would not be allowed to vote as a *nation*; the canonists *there*, being clear, that they were included in the nation of Germany, as they were not governed by their own princes, but subdued by Germans, who were themselves tributary to the emperor. But they setting forth, that their king was also monarch of Ireland, which kingdom ALWAYS held the third rank amongst the nations of Europe, these Ecclesiastics, on this account, were decreed to precede those of France †. Thus opposing argument to argument, though we should not call in the aid of history, it must be admitted, that, from plain reason we must recur to Irish history, to elucidate the early periods of that of Britain.

However the Milesian Irish might be imposed on, in the relations of the first invaders of Ireland, they could not certainly be with respect to the people they themselves subdued. The Damnonii whom they subdued, had long governed the kingdom ; and the Belgæ, though greatly depressed, were still numerous and powerful, and did actually aid these invaders. From their own knowledge of both people, our Senachies have assured us, that they had a language in common with the Milesians, and were descended from one common stock ; all deriving their pedigree, through Magog, from Japhet. The Milesians being descended from Baath, eldest son of Magog, and all the preceding colonies,

* Vita Jul. Agricol.

† Aët. Conc. Const. See also an English Translation, vol. ii. p. 42, &c.

from Fathocta, his third son. That their language was the same, not only the voice of antiquity, but even of modern times declares. Dr. Creagh, archbishop of Ardmach, confined for his religion in the Tower of London, where he died, A. C. 1587, in his Irish Grammar, wrote some years before, affirms, “that the
 “Irish language was the only one spoke by the natives, from the
 “coming of Partholan, 300 years after the flood, to this day”. O’Sullivan *, who figured about the same time, asserts the same. Dr. Keating, and Grat-Lucius † are equally positive; and O’Flaherty admits that it has been always a received opinion—“*Harum quatuor coloniarum duces (says he) cum Milesiis dicuntur agnovisse patrem Magog, Noachi ex Japheto nepotem, & linguam Scoticam omnibus in usu fuisse ‡.*” They are equally positive, that the first invaders of Britain, were the followers of Briotan, surnamed the Bald; and that from this prince the country assumed the name of Britain, as the people did that of Britons; and since they must originate from some colony, where can they trace a more honourable source? Thus, a very ancient chronological poem beginning with “Fuarius a Salter Chasil,” informs us; “that Neimheidh, and his children landed in the lovely island
 “of Ireland; and that from him the Fir-bolgs and Tuatha da
 “Danaans are descended”.—Thus he sings, “Taine Neimheach,
 “gona Chloin-alsidh Inis ard lbhin, nas nata do ghein Tuatha
 “De, agus Fir-Bholg a haonchre.”

It could not be vanity that made Irish writers assert, that Briotan led a colony of Neimhedian Irish into Albion; since the Picts, who were a more numerous and a warlike people, and to whom our ancestors also assigned settlements in Britain, are confessed by them to be a colony of strangers. But as the duty of an historian is to investigate truth above all things, and to conceal from his readers nothing that may help to disguise, or render facts

* Histor. Ibern. † Cambr. Evers. ‡ Ogygia.

doubtful,

doubtful. I must acknowledge, that the Venerable Bede asserts *, that the early Britons came from Brittany, and that from them, Britain took its name. This is undoubtedly a mistake of this writer, but a mistake he may be well excused for. The Britons and Saxons were in a continued state of warfare: so much so, that he complains, that the hatred of the former to the Saxon name was such, that though they were themselves early Christians, yet they refused to send missionaries, or take the least pains to instruct them in the faith. Hence they had recourse to the Irish Scots, for teachers and preachers. This being by himself confessed to be the case, we may presume that Bede gave himself little trouble about British antiquities, and took his account from hear-say. For nothing is more certain, than that the ancient native name of Brittany, was Leta, Letania, or Letavia; nor was it even very long before the days of Bede that it changed it for that of Brittany, being so called from the invasion of Conon-Bertrand D'Argentrée. A celebrated civilian of the 16th century, is positive that it was so called, from the clearest evidence; and Mezeray † is certain, that it retained that name in the fourth; and we shall shew, that it was so called in the fifth century. St. Fiech, bishop of Slepty, and amongst the first of St. Patrick's converts, in his life of this Apostle, in 34 stanzas, tells us, rann the 5th.

Do fardh tar *Ealpa* uile
de mhuir ba hamhra reatha;
Conidh far gaibh la *German*
an deas an deisciort *Leatha*.

i. e. “ Patrick having passed over all Albion, (for *Ealpa* is *here*
“ understood in that light, not for the Alps) crossed the sea hap-
“ pily, and remained with Germanus, in the southern parts of

* Histor. Eccl. Brit. cap. 1. † Histoire de France. t. i. p. 357.

“ Letania.”

“Letania.” Here is a farther proof of what French writers have affirmed; it at the same time shews the antiquity and authenticity of that poem.

C H A P. VII.

Britons, their first landing in Albion, and why so called—the true meaning of the word Kimri—of the landing of the Belgæ, or second colony in Britain—the arrival of the Damnonii, or third colony—of the Brigantes, or fourth people—mistakes of British antiquarians, with respect to these different emigrants, explained—had a language in common with the Irish—not to be confounded with the Caledones—their different names explained by the Irish language—remarks of Llhuid elucidated.

BRiotan Maol, the son of Fergus, son of Neimheidh, a descendant of Magog, by his son Fathocta, retired from Ireland to North Britain, from the rage of the Africans, about A. M. 2380; and as his posterity encreased, they extended more to the southward. Of this colony our annals furnish no other accounts, but that they were the aborigines of Britain; that from their leader the country took its name, and that they spoke the Scythian or Irish language. From the Welsh, or old Britons, being called in their native language *Kimri*, the authors of the Universal History suppose them the posterity of Gomer. Mac Pherfon * derives them from the Cimbri of Germany; and Mr. Whitaker † brings them from the Cimmerii of Gaul. All these conjectures proceed from an ignorance of the Irish history, and of the Irish language. The posterity of Briotan, when they settled in Wales,

* Introduction to British and Irish History, p. 28.

† History of the Britons, p. 51.

called themselves Kimri, as inhabiting a country full of hills and vallies, from the Irish Cumar, a valley, hence Cumaraic, the inhabitants of a country full of hills and dales, and which a district in the county of Waterford still retains : and to prove more fully the truth of this derivation, the Brigantes, another colony from Ireland, who emigrated near 400 years later than the Britons, and who first inhabited Cumberland, and from thence extended themselves by degrees into Durham, York, Westmoreland, &c. were also called Kimri, from their first settlement.

The next colony to the Britons were the Fir-Bolgs, or Belgæ. Numbers of these we see retired to Britain from the tyranny of the Damnonii of Ireland, from the year of the world 2541, to 2580. These also spoke the Irish language, and appear to have been an intrepid race of men, having made some noble efforts to recover their country from these new invaders. Mac Pheron transports them from Gaul, and so does Whitaker. They possessed themselves of Kent, Middlesex, and extended to Hampshire and Wiltshire, &c. A considerable number of the Damnonii, or Tuatha da Danaans, in their turn felt also the force of power and oppression. Unable to resist the superior power and discipline of the Scottish invaders, or Milesians ; such of them as could not stoop to servitude, or acknowledge new masters, retired also to Britain, or more properly had settlements appointed for them there, by the victors, as we see they bestowed soon after others on their *tributaries*, the Picts, and on their relations, the Brigantes. These Damnonii occupied Cornwall, Devonshire, and the places adjacent ; and this colony began to get existence in Britain about A. M. 2736, and greatly encreased afterwards. In fine, the Brigantes, or Clana Breogean, began to get footing there a very few years after. Mr. Whitaker supposes the aborigines of Britain and the Belgæ, to be the only principal colonies of that island ; and that they were afterwards indiscriminately called

called Cimbri, Gael, Welsh, Brigantes, Caledones, &c. He supposes them called Cimbri, to denote their source from those of the continent; and the country Britain, importing their being separated from their brethren there—derivations extremely stretched and far-fetched. Brigantes comes under the same explanation, and Caledones imports such of them as lived in a woody country.

Far from censuring on this occasion, I highly honour Mr. Whitaker's ingenious attempts to illustrate the ancient history of his country. Destitute of proper materials—indeed of any materials, but the names of these different colonies—where could he seek for information, but from the accounts of nations of corresponding names on the continent? these he has happily introduced, and made as much of the subject as, in a case so obscure, could be well made. How could it be otherwise? Britain, a theatre of war betwixt the Romans, Irish, and Picts, for above four centuries; involved in greater misery through the tyranny of the Saxons, and after them of the Danes and Normans; could the more refined works of peace be attended to, in such scenes of distress and confusion? We see similar causes produce like effects, with regard to the Albanian Irish; who not only lost those records which they possessed, at, and after the days of the Venerable Bede, but, even through disuse, the very letter of the language! so that in an after-period, i. e. about the reign of Edward I. when a knowledge of history appeared necessary to them, *to support their independency*, and letters began to revive, they adopted the Roman instead of the Irish alphabet! Similar to this, is the case of the Irish at this day. In the last century, the English tongue was confined to a narrow space; and though many of our great men spoke it, yet, like the French and Italian, it was acquired. Very few but understood and studied their native language, and the quantity of vellum MSS. which were cut up and destroyed

afterwards was amazing. In a word, thirty or forty years ago, there were many schools for the Irish language, but at this day it is little attended to: and, what is more extraordinary, is, that very few even of our gentry now know, or pretend to know, any thing of their native history!

All British antiquaries from Camden, Llhuid, and Rowland, to Whitaker, and—shall I class him amongst such respectable names—Mac Pherson, however are unanimous, that the British colonists spoke the same language in the mean, though differing in many things. The British and Cornish, Mr. Llhuid shews, come nearer to each other than to the Irish. The British of the Brigantes of Cumberland, he observes, is much nearer the native Irish; and that of the Albanian Scots is known at this day to be a dialect of the Irish, as is that of the inhabitants of the Isle of Man. Now all these variations serve but as additional proofs to the truth of our records. Though both British and Irish are the descendants of Magog, yet we see an early separation in the issue of his sons. The Neimhedian Irish must have differed from that of the Belgæ. A separation of 117 years, must produce some difference in language. The Damnonii were 155 years cut off from any intercourse with their Irish brethren, and of course the difference was greater. If a well-bred Englishman was to go to the barony of Fort, in the county of Wexford, he would with difficulty understand the English spoke there, and which is the very same as spoken by the English colony first planted there, in the days of Henry II. That the language of the Brigantes should approach still nearer the Irish, cannot be wondered at; they were, as we shall observe in its place, of the same blood with the sons of Milesius, being all great-grandsons of Breogan, and for that reason called by our antiquaries, Clana Breogan, to distinguish their issue from those of the Clana Miledh, or sons of Milesius. These, it will appear, highly polished their language; and
being

being separated from their ancestors of the line of Fathochta, at a very early period, of course the greater the difference in dialect. In fine, the language of the Albanian Irish is, at this day, almost the same with the mother-tongue.

Though I would not wish or pretend to form an historic basis on the derivation of words, how well so ever founded, yet, as auxiliaries to history, I think them in many instances admissible. The Britons, the Belgæ, the Damnonii, and Brigantes, we see, were different British colonies, though from the same source, and their names I hope I have fairly and naturally accounted for. The Caledones were a very different people from all these, and spoke a different language. In the days of the Venerable Bede, he informs us, that the languages of South Britain, were the British and Saxon. We see, though the Britons were of different tribes, yet he confesses their language the same; but he is positive, that the Picts or Caledones had a language of their own. He could not be deceived: he was on their borders, and intimately acquainted with some of their most eminent people. How could moderns get over this assertion, or make them and the Britons one people? Here again the utility of Irish history becomes conspicuous. These people, as Bede testifies, landed in Ireland soon after its conquest by the sons of Milesius; they were called Picts, from painting their bodies, and Caledones, from Cathluan, the son of Gud, who was their leader to North Britain: for Cathluan is with us pronounced Caluan, and Don is used to denote the posterity of any person. Thus Caledone, the explanation of which has cost so much trouble, and given rise to such various conjectures, implies no more than the Posterity of Caluan. Even the names of places and people in Roman Britain, shew their Irish origin. I shall take no trouble to refute those of Whitaker and Mac Pherson; because I know of no language that can justify them. One part of this people the Romans called Silures, from
F 2 Siol,

Siol, the issue, and Eire, Ireland, as glorying more, and perhaps being closer connected with the mother country than the rest. The people in and about Kent they called Cantii. It is evident that in the native British, however, they must have been called Cantiri, because the capital of Kent is still called Canterbury. Now Cean-tire, is Irish for an head-land, and such was the name they gave to a similar head-land in Scotland. Some were denominated Trinobantes, from trian, an hero, and oban, sudden. I do suppose that these were a set of warriors; as we know in Ireland, certain counties were better known for soldiers than others. The Durotrigæ, inhabited the sea coasts, from dur, water, and treid, a quarrel—I suppose pirates, or powerful at sea. Dobuni, such as lived in low situations, from domlain, deep, hollow; for it is to be noticed, that B and N are in the Irish sometimes substituted for each other; and that with an auxiliary H, both carry the same sound. Cape Cornwall was called Belerium, and Beal is Irish for a mouth, and Eire, Ireland; being the place where the first fugitive Damnonii landed. The inhabitants of South Wales were named Dimatæ; and Dimtu implies protection, and Ath, just. The Ordovices, from ord, lofty, and amhas (pronounced avas) a soldier, or the warriors of the hills. The Isle of Man was so called from Mannan, who we see first opened a trade to it from Ireland.

Thus the different British tribes, the Picts excepted, were to demonstration, not Celtic, but Scythian colonies; not the descendants of Gomer, but of Magog. But that the smallest doubt should not remain in an affair so important to British antiquities, Llhuïd himself shall be my testimony. “The next thing I have
 “to make out (says he) is, that part of the Irish, called Gadelians,
 “have once dwelt in England and Wales. There are none of
 “the Irish, that *I know of*, amongst all their historical writings,
 “that mention they were possessed of England and Wales; and
 “yet

“ yet whoever takes notice of a great many of the names of the
“ rivers and mountains throughout the kingdom, will find no
“ reason to doubt *but the Irish must have been the inhabitants,*
“ *when these names were imposed on them.*” But Irish writers, *we*
see, have said, that colonies from Ireland first inhabited and even
gave the name to Britain. They most assuredly held all North
Britain under subjection; since we shall find them assign it as a
settlement to the Picts. That a part of South Britain was so cir-
cumstanced, we must conclude from the settling the Brigantes in
Cumberland, &c. To shew still further, how much consideration
and attention should be paid to the preceding records; I shall, by way
of closure to this very long chapter, just remind my reader, that
in the beginning of the fourth chapter, we are told that the Dam-
nonii resided for some time in Danemark, instructing the people
in arts and letters; and, in confirmation of this, it is highly re-
markable that Wormius declares *, that the most ancient alphabet
used by the northern nations of Europe was called, Irlandorum
Literæ. These nations had also an occult manner of writing, de-
scribed by Celsius †, when compared with our ogham or hiero-
graphic character, examples of which may be seen in O’Flaherty’s
Ogygia, Mac Geoghegan’s History, Ware, Mac Curtin’s Gram-
mar, the learned Vallancy’s, &c. the curious enquirer will be
convinced, that both the Runic and Irish were on the same plan.
Add to this, that this ogham of the northern nations like the
Irish had but sixteen letters! the very expression of Runic, which
they gave this species of writing, and which name their later
writers have not been able to explain, is pure Irish. The word
run, with us at this day signifies secrecy, mystery, &c. and was
justly applicable to this alphabet.

* Litera Runica, cap. 5. † Vallancy’s Irish Grammar, p. 6, 7.

B O O K II.

C H A P. I.

Origin of the Milesian Irish from Phœnius, the inventor of letters—when he flourished—of Niul and his journey to Egypt—of Gadel, and the mistakes of some modern Irish writers corrected—the names of Phœnians, Gadelians, and Scots imposed on the Irish, and why—of Easru and Sru.

WE must naturally conclude that the people, who, with such care and philanthropy, transmitted to posterity the preceding records, were uncommonly attentive to preserve their own transactions, and those of their ancestors. I even figure to myself, that the curious antiquarian will express some degree of avidity, to see what they have to say for themselves; and I shall gratify this curiosity, but with a scrupulous attention to our annals *.

Phœnius, the inventor of letters is claimed as the founder of the Irish or Milesian race. He is said to be the son of Baath, the son of Magog, the son of Japhet, the son of Noah; but if we admit of this genealogy, we will at the same time see the necessity for supposing that some more generations must have intervened between Phœnius and Noah, to account for the great increase of mankind in his days. Without entering into a discussion of this kind, neither entertaining or interesting, I shall commence the chronology of the Milesian race with this prince Phœnius. He, it is agreed on by all parties, was our great an-

* Gabhail Chlana Mile—Leabhar Muimhuin—Cion Drom-Sneachta, &c.

cestor:

ancestor: zealous Christians might have traced him by an imaginary genealogy up to Japhet, to whose posterity scripture tells us, *the isles of the Gentiles* (Europe) was given as an inheritance; and this it is, that has furnished moderns with specious arguments, to suppose the very early Irish chronology to have been invented about the time of the introduction of Christianity amongst them.

With Phœnius our Ethnic historians began their history, and so shall I. He is surnamed in our annals Farfaidh, or the Sage; and is highly celebrated for his wisdom, and for being the first inventor of letters. Desirous to be informed of the different languages which then prevailed, he appointed seventy learned men to disperse themselves through different quarters of the world, and to return at a certain day marked out, after the expiration of seven years. He supplied them with shipping and attendance, and whatever else was judged necessary for so great an enterprize. In the interim he himself went to the plains of Senaar, where schools had been long established, to receive every information he could, towards forwarding his great design of establishing arts and sciences in his dominions. On the return of these linguists, schools were erected; but as events trusted entirely to memory and tradition might be liable to misconception and misrepresentation, a medium was found out, by fixing on certain signs, for certain sounds, and thus by degrees was the first alphabet formed, which consisted of no more than sixteen letters. In this were to be recorded whatever related to history, philosophy, and other sciences, such as they then possessed; but for matters of religion, a particular alphabet was invented, to be studied by none but the sacred order. I am sensible that our modern sceptics will turn their eyes to more modern times, when they read of schools on the plains of Senaar, and will look for an explanation from the early Irish Christians. To obviate the objection makes me thus stop short. But Herodotus, called the father of history, and who flourished

flourished centuries before Christ, tell us *, that the Egyptians derived the knowledge of letters, geometry, astronomy, &c. from the Babylonians ; and that they possessed at the same time a sacred character, and a letter for common occurrences ; Senaar is near Babylon ; and the Egyptians, as we shall see, received letters from thence through the son of Phænius. Senaar might or might not be known to Herodotus, but it must to Phænius who visited it.

The principal persons concerned with Phænius in the above great invention, were, his preceptor Gadel, the son of Eathoir, and Caoih, called sometimes Gar the Hebrew. From Phænius a branch of our tongue is yet called Bearla Phæni, or the language of Phænius ; but it is more generally named Gaidhealag, or (as pronounced) Gailag, from the above Gadel. Of the numerous issue of this great prince, the names of two only have been handed down, Neanuil his successor, and Niul the high-priest, and superintendent of the literati. This Phænius is in our history styled king of Scythia ; but from the expanded settlements of the Scythians in the interior parts of Asia, in times posterior to this, moderns have looked for his residence there. Every circumstance and every fact that can be collected, unite in fixing it on the Syrian coast bordering the Mediterranean, and to be the ancient Phœnicia, so renowned in history. As to the æra in which he flourished we shall offer the best, and what appears to us the least exceptionable rules to fix it on, with some degree of precision. A certainty in chronology is of the utmost consequence to history ; and as the history of almost every other nation of the world, has been broke in upon and interrupted by new invaders, ours should be looked upon as a kind of polar star, to direct future chronologists in their pursuits.

* Euterpe, seu lib. ii.

Our annalists count twenty-three generations from Phœnius to his lineal successors, the sons of Milesius, landing in Ireland. This last period, by the Psalter of Cashell and the Book of Conquests, is fixed at 1300 years before Christ. The most exact chronology makes it thirty-six years later, i. e. A. M. 2736, if we reckon according to the Hebrew computation: though I do not mean to become an advocate for it, against that of the Septuagint, or any other; yet, for the facility of reckoning, I shall for the future count from it. If we suppose thirty-five years to have intervened between each of the above twenty-three generations—and I think it a reasonable conception—it will then appear that 805 years must have elapsed from the days of Phœnius, to the conquest of Ireland by the sons of Milesius; and that he died in the year of the world 1931, or 2071 years before the incarnation.

On the death of this great prince, the founder of arts and sciences, and the father of the Irish nation, his son Neaniul was proclaimed king of Phœnicia, and his brother assumed the office of high-priest. The fame of the piety, wisdom, and learning of Niul, spread far and wide, insomuch that Pharoah king of Egypt sent ambassadors to invite him to his court. Thither he repaired by his brother's permission, with a numerous and splendid retinue, and was most honourably received. Lands were assigned them for their support; and in order to induce Niul to settle in the country, Pharoah bestowed on him his daughter Scota for a wife. This establishment of Niul, whose history and that of his successors we are to pursue, we may presume happened in the year 1941. From Niul's being thus prince and high-priest, I take it for granted that his posterity retained the name of the *Sacred Generation*; and Ireland, their ultimate settlement, the *Holy Island*; since nothing is more certain, than that Ireland was so called long before the Christian æra.

- 1996 Gadel, the eldest son of Niul by the princess Scota, was also the successor to his dominions in Egypt. He was so called from his father's preceptor, to which the epithet Glas was added, on account of the brightness of his armour. Some of our writers entertain us with a story that Niul and Moses were contemporaries; that he greatly assisted this Jewish leader in his retreat from Egypt; that his son Gadel, being then a youth, was bit by a snake, which Moses cured by a touch of his wand; and that in return for the humanity shewn the Israelites, Moses predicted that the country which his posterity would possess, should be free from all venomous animals. The glaring anachronism in this tale alone renders it ridiculous. Had such an intercourse happened either between Niul, or any of his posterity in Egypt and Moses, no doubt the early Christians would not have forgot a circumstance so honourable to their country, and to the new religion. But St. Fiech, one of St. Patrick's earliest disciples, and who published a life of this great apostle, immediately after his decease (and who died A. C. 493), though in it he calls Ireland Tuatha Phæni, or the country of the Phænians, and the people Scots, yet takes no notice of this tale. What is more remarkable, the scholiast on this poem of St. Fiech, whilst he tells us that Ireland was called Tuatha Phæni, from Phænius, and the people Scots, from Scota, the mother of Gadel-glas, yet never once hints at the above story. Could a more favourable time offer for introducing it, had it any foundation in truth? St. Patrick himself during his apostleship, twice presided over the literati in their revisions of the national records, and yet we find no mention of Moses; and no doubt in his days, but the history of the voyages and exploits of the Gadelians was much more full and circumstantial than what we find it now. St. Cormoc, in his Psalter, wrote in the 10th century, so far from synchronizing Moses and Niulus,

Niulus, tells us in his relation of these travels, that the time the Gadelians quitted Egypt was 470 years after the deluge, i. e. A. M. 2126, 327 years before Moses quitted Egypt. Upon the whole, the reader must be convinced that this story is an interpolation of later times, and by no means to be connected with genuine Irish history; and yet Dr. O'Brien * tells us, that it is mentioned by the above scholiast on St. Fiech, who flourished in the sixth century, than which nothing is falser, as may be seen by consulting the work itself †. I should not be so severe on this gentleman had not he, by adopting this falshood, made it a plea for attacking the veracity of his native history.

This prince Gadel-glas I conceive was highly renowned in his days; because, as from his grand-father we have retained the name of Phænians, so from him we are called Gadelians, and from his mother, Scots. All this is confirmed by the following ancient rann or verse:—

Phæni o Phænius adbhearta, brigh gan dochta.

Gaoidhel o Gaoidhal-glas garta, Scuit o Scota.

i. e. “beyond question we are called Phænians from Phænius, “Gadelians from Gadel-glas, and Scots from Scota”. It is ridiculous enough to observe how much this simple explication of these names, which we yet retain, offend our delicate modern commentators, whilst at the same time, out of their great *inventive* store, they make no attempts at giving us better, or more rational ones; but modern scholiasts glory in being the ignes fatui of ancient writers!

Eafu succeeded his father Gadel-glas, A. M. 2006. Of this 2006 prince nothing either material or interesting is related; and after

* Irish Dictionary, remarks on the letter A.

† Trias Thaumaturga, p. 2. 5. &c.

2036 a reign of thirty years, he made way for his son Sru. In the administration of Sru were great commotions and revolutions in Egypt. Another Pharoah arose, who knew not the children of Gadel-glas. Unable to oppose so great a power, Sru prepared his ships to escape from this land of bondage; but so close was he pressed, that four ships only could be collected. In these were embarked his principal nobility, with their ladies, and most valuable effects. It is recorded in a very ancient poem, that twenty-five chiefs with their wives, were lodged in each ship. With these he proceeded to sea, and directed his course to Crete; but before we proceed any farther in our history, it seems highly proper to offer our proofs and illustrations of the preceding account. This enquiry is the more interesting, as I flatter myself that new and important lights will be thrown on history and chronology in general from it; and here follow the reasons for this supposition.

C H A P. II.

The foregoing relation defended—the Phœnician and Irish alphabets the same—historical proofs and illustrations of the above—migration to Egypt—of the Atalantic isle of the Egyptians, and the Ogygia of Homer, &c.

IT is certainly greatly to be regretted, that the farther we push our enquiries into ancient history, the more we find it absorbed in fable. This observation is not confined to the history of Greece: nations infinitely more ancient and earlier civilized, as the Babylonian, Chaldean, Assyrian, and Egyptian states, bear ample testimony to this melancholy truth! Beyond a certain period every thing appears a perfect chaos! kings descended from gods and demi-gods; reigns, revolutions, and interesting events
recorded

recorded without order, time or place ! not so in the preceding relation. We behold a regular succession of rulers, without any thing of the fabulous, or even the marvellous. It carries too great an air of truth and simplicity to suppose it the work of invention, had we even wanted collateral evidences to support it.

The Scythians, of whom the Irish are a branch, were accounted the greatest and most intrepid nation of antiquity ; nor were they less renowned for their justice, humanity, and hospitality. Though their mode of worship is not well known, yet it is agreed on all hands, that they worshipped in woods and groves, as did our ancestors. The remoteness of their ancestry was held in such veneration by even the ancients themselves, that, *Scytharum gens antiquissima*, became with them a common proverb, as Justin observes. Josephus so far agrees with our annalists, in declaring the Scythians the descendants of Magog ; and places them, as I have, on the borders of the Mediterranean, from whence he conducts them *by sea*, to different places *. Indeed so strongly were the ancients possessed with the notion, that all early emigrations were effected by water, that Tacitus gives for a reason the Germans being the pure origin of that country, and derived from no other source, the difficulty if not the impossibility of ships venturing into such boisterous and swelling seas †. Pliny tells us, that Hieropolis, or the Holy City (so called because dedicated to the Dea Syria), was called also Magog, as being his ancient residence ; and we read of another city near Damascus named Scythopolis, or the Scythian city. Ancient tradition and the testimony of Berofus ‡ declare, that Tyre was built soon after the flood, by Tiras the son of Japhet ; and may not the Scythopolis of the Greeks be the Sidon of the Scots or Phœnians ? from Scuit and Don the Scythian fortrefs.

* Antiq. lib. i. cap. 6. † De Morib. German. ‡ Theatr. Terræ Sanctæ, p. 11.

By fixing the early seats of these emigrants in Phœnicia, we may plainly see how Phœnius became acquainted with the schools of Senaar, as well as Herodotus, without the aid of the Christian system; and every evidence of history concur in this point. An informed people could not long possess a maritime coast without availing themselves of the use of this element. The bare floating of timber would point out to them the facility of joining boards and making rafts; and the spreading out of their very cloaths, would furnish hints for sailing. By universal consent the Phœnicians were allowed to be the first ship-builders and navigators, according to the poet.—

Prima ratem ventis, credere docta Tyros.

They were also, it is agreed upon, the first inventors of letters.—

Phœnices primi (famæ si credimus) ausi
Mansuram rudibus vocem signare figuris.

Their alphabet in its original state consisted of but sixteen letters, and it is remarkable that ours at this day, contains but seventeen; one of which I am persuaded was an interpolation of later times, namely the letter F; as the P with an H added to it, answers every sound for which F was intended, except its total aspiration. Niulus by our history was appointed high-priest and chief of the literati; and the same post Amhergin, the son of Milesius filled in Ireland on its reduction by his brothers! thus the tale is told:

Primus *Amerginus* (*Genu-Candidus*) Author Ierne;
Historicus, Index lege, Poeta, Sophus.

The Phœnician history informs us, that Sichæus was appointed high priest by his brother Mettinus; but that Pygmalion his
suc-

successor made away with him for his riches, &c. the story may be seen in Virgil, and it is here only barely hinted at, to shew the correspondent customs of the Phœnicians and Irish; to this may be added, that their deities were the same. They both adored Bel, or the sun, the moon and the stars. The house of Rimmon* which the Phœnicians worshipped in, like our temples of Fleachta, in Meath, was sacred to the moon. The word Rimmon has by no means been understood by the different commentators; and yet by recuring to the Irish (a branch of the Phœnician) it becomes very intelligible; for Re is Irish for the moon, and Muadh signifies an image; and the compound word Reamhan, signifies prognosticating by the appearances of the moon. It appears by the life of our great St. Columba, that the Druid temples were HERE decorated with figures of the sun, the moon, and stars. The Phœnicians under the name of Bel-Samen, adored the Supreme; and it is pretty remarkable, that *to this very day*, to wish a friend every happiness this life can afford, we say in Irish, “*the blessings of Samen and Bel be with you!*” that is, of all the seasons, Bel signifying the sun, and Samhain the moon. Neptune was alike adored by the Phœnicians and Irish; and it is worthy notice that the Irish language ONLY, explains the attributes of this deity, though common to other countries; from Naomh, or Naoph, sacred, and Ton, aware!

We have already noticed the schools said to have been established by Phœnius after his return from Senaar; and this we find—indeed with wonder—confirmed by holy writ; for Joshua tells us † that the city of Debir, which his army destroyed, was in remoter days called Kiriath-Sephir, which literally signifies the city of Books or Letters. From this text the learned Goguet is clear, that arts and letters were publicly taught here soon after the

* 2 Kings, ch. v. ver. 18.

† Chap. xv. ver. 15.

flood *. In the fragments of Sanconiathon, preserved by Porphyry and Eusebuis, Phœnix is second in the list of their kings; and if we suppose him the son of Baath it will correspond with our annals. Indeed the various revolutions that country underwent as well by Joshua as other invaders, and the neglect and destruction of annals ever attendant on such misfortunes, might encourage succeeding writers to mix fable with tradition, and conjecture with history. It was the anachronisms and absurdities found in this fragment, that made Mr. Dodwell † labour to prove that no such author ever existed; and that it was fabricated by some early Greek. But it would be hard to say for what end such imposition could be offered. Materials, I take for granted, must have been had to work on; and these very probably (like some of our moderns), they formed to their own ideas. Theodoret conjectures that the word Sanconiathon signifies Philalethes, or a lover of truth. For my own part, I think writers have rather mistaken the title of the work; and as letters were hereditary in families, as well in Phœnicia as in Ireland, the word Sanconiathon was the title of the national history, from Seanachas, antiquity, and Aithne, knowledge; just as the grand digest of our history, was called Seanachas-more, or the great antiquity.

But to prove to conviction the origin of the Irish nation, it is to be noticed that the Carthaginians, who were confessedly a Phœnician colony, were, like the Irish, called also Poeni. That they spoke the Phœnician language will not be doubted; and if it will appear that the Bearla-Pheni, or Irish, is the same with the Carthaginian, demonstration can go no farther. This the learned Colonel Vallencey has proved beyond a doubt in a late publication ‡; and in the course of the present history it will

* Origine des Arts & des Sciences, tom. iv. p. 84.

† A Discourse on Sanconiathon's Phœnician History.

‡ Collation of the Irish and Punic languages, &c.

appear

appear that a close connection and correspondence was constantly kept up between the two states. Both were renowned for their fleets and for commerce, and were alike attentive to the encouragement of arts, sciences, manufactures, and agriculture.

If we consult modern writers we shall find their ideas of ancient navigation extremely confined. Scarce will they allow them more than coasting voyages; as if they were not as capable of consulting the great book of nature, and their own particular interests, as the moderns. Scripture affords sufficient proofs of an early knowledge of astronomy, navigation, and commerce; and it is agreed upon, that before the days of Abraham, the Phœnicians were a commercial people and carried on a considerable traffic with the Greek islands. Nay Herodotus assures us, that they carried on about this time an extensive trade, monopolizing all the commerce of Egypt and Assyria and making distant voyages; that it was in one of these, whilst exposing their goods to sale at Argos, that they carried off the famous Io, daughter to Inachus. That at, or soon after the days of Abraham, a colony from Egypt invaded and possessed themselves of Greece, the voice of antiquity declares; but yet when it is considered that the early Egyptians held mariners in great detestation, which their religion inculcated, Typhon or the sea, being the enemy of Osiris; that their priests vowing celibacy, would touch neither salt or fish, and and of course considered that element, and those that traded thereon, as impure; and that not till the days of Sesostris had they any ideas of maritime affairs—it will be difficult to reconcile this account to reason, without recurring to Irish history. There we behold the son of the great Phœnius married to a daughter of Egypt, and large possessions granted to him and to his followers. We see Gadel-glas and Easru peaceably succeed to these territories; and when we consider how close to the time of the vocation of Abraham, Sru possessed himself of Crete, we shall I

conceive be struck with the great lights which our history throws on this whole relation.

If from this we recur to the history of Egypt, however obscured by fable, we shall see farther evidences in support of our history. There we may behold amongst their first princes, a Nilus, or Niulus, registered, and the only one of the name. We learn that the ancient name of the Nile was Abantri, or the father of rivers; and Ab in old Irish, as well as in some of the Oriental tongues, is father, and Ouen a river! We also read that it changed this name for that of Nilus, in honour of this prince, who by canals and aqueducts conveyed its water to distant parts of the kingdom. Now the name Niulus was, and still is peculiar to the Irish nation; by it many of our princes were formerly called, and to commemorate this great ancestry, the chiefs of the Heremonian line glory in the name of O'Neill at this day. But besides these, which are something more than presumptive proofs, we find a memory of these early and some subsequent events preserved by the Egyptians themselves, though shamefully defaced by exaggerations and anachronisms.

In these early days, when nations were thinly inhabited, an inconsiderable body of men were sufficient to subjugate extensive countries. We may judge by the fame of the Argonautic expedition, what trifling exploits were made to swell to mighty deeds. The story I allude to is this: Plutarch, in the life of Solon, tells us, that when studying in Egypt, he was informed by the priests of Sais of the famous Atalantic Isle. The relation was so singular and striking, that he formed the plan of an epic poem on it, but was prevented by old age. The story was, that these islanders became so powerful by sea as to reduce Africa and Greece, and were meditating new conquests, till checked by the superior power of the Athenians. That this famous island was placed beyond the Pillars of Hercules, in the Atalantic ocean; and that
its

its inhabitants, 9000 years before Solon, lorded it over Lybia, as far as Egypt, as well as over Greece. But that the power of these islanders should appear adequate to the extent of their conquests, these priests assured Solon that it was larger than Europe and Asia; and because it was known that no island of such extent then existed, they affirmed that in an after period it suddenly disappeared. Plato, a descendant from Solon, in his Dialogues of Timæus and Critias, resumed this work; the translator of which entitles them, *Prisci Mundi Historia*; to which may be added, that Lord Bacon, in his New Atlantis, deems the whole relation to be founded on facts. Sir Isaac Newton has taken some pains to elucidate this account *. He fixes the time of these exploits at 400 years earlier; but remarks, that the Egyptian priests so magnified the time—as indeed they did the story—that instead of 400 they made it 9000 years. The size of the island, we may add, they magnified in the same ratio; since they affirmed it to be larger than Europe and Asia, though by them confessed to be AN EUROPEAN ISLAND!

We see evidently that it was by way of pre-eminence to all other islands in that sea, called the Atalantic Isle, and it only remains to ascertain the place, and all the other difficulties will disappear. Homer tells us, in the Odyssey, that immediately after the taking of Troy, which was A. M. 2767, Ulysses found Calypso, the daughter of Atlas, seated in this isle, which, on account of its great antiquity, he also calls Ogygia. He tells us that it was about ten days sail from the Pillars of Hercules, at least that Ulysses was so long in his passage to it; and that it was named the Woody Island likewise. Ireland being always called Ogygia, as well as Inis na Bhfiodhbhaidhe, or the Woody Island, and its distance from the Streight's mouth agreeing so exactly with

* Chronology.

Homer, would tempt one to pronounce it at once the happy island alluded to. Plutarch, in his life of Sertorius, throws new lights on this matter. This great commander, he tells us, determined to make it his retreat from the persecution of his enemies; and he describes so exactly its soil and climate, and its distance from Africa to be about 1200 miles, that no other country could be found to answer the description, though M. Dacier, in his translation of this writer, affirms it to be Andalusia, and ON THE CONTINENT too! But lest what is said may not be thought sufficient to identify the place, Plutarch in an other work tells us *, that this Ogygia, this famous Atalantic Isle, is opposite to the Celtæ, and but four days sail from Britain!

The country being thus I apprehend *ascertained*, we will by the help of our annals easily distinguish the history from the allegory, and from the fable. The history comprehends a great space of time. It alludes to their first settlement in Egypt, and to their subsequent exploits in Greece and Africa, as we shall presently see. Neptune, who was supposed to preside over the sea, was the father of Atlas; this last, by his knowledge in astronomy and invention of the sphere, greatly improved and extended navigation; hence the strength and power which commerce afford, are alluded to; hence, by way of pre-eminence in maritime affairs (which Tacitus many centuries after acknowledged), this country was called THE ATALANTIC ISLE!

After such proofs and such illustrations of times so extremely remote, will any candid man of letters deny the truth of our early records? will he any longer refuse us the use of letters, when it appears to demonstration, that the very father of letters, of arts, and of sciences was our great ancestor? will he deny us the early use of ships, when it becomes evident, that the first inventor of ships

* De Facie in Orbe Lunæ.

and of navigation were our *great ancestors*? But all these relations will acquire new dignity by pursuing these emigrants from their dereliction of Egypt, till their final settlement in Ireland, which I shall describe with the most exact fidelity from our annals; and then, as I have hitherto done, bring illustrations and proofs from the mutilated records of the different countries they passed through. It is agreed upon in courts of justice, that circumstantial evidences, and by parties no way connected with each other, ought to be preferred to positive facts; for in the first instance no imposition can be intended. This surely ought to carry the greatest weight in history, especially ancient history when subject to the smallest doubt.

C H A P. III.

Migration of the Gadelian colony to Crete—to Phœnicia—of the Syrens—land in Getulia—proceed to Galicia, and found the city Brigantium—of Gollamh or Milesius, and his exploits in Phœnicia and Egypt—of Heber and Heremon, and their resolution to quit Spain.

THE dereliction of Egypt by the Phœnians, or posterity of Gadel-glas, happening in the administration of Sru, we may fix it in the year of the world 2046, and tenth year of his reign. Sru and his son Heber-Scot were the conductors of this colony, who the high-priest was we are not told; but we suppose it to have been the famous Cadmus, so celebrated in Grecian history, and brother to Sru.

Crete at once yielded to them its sovereignty. It appeared to the old inhabitants a blessing; for instead of distressing and hunting
ing

ing them down like wild beasts, they introduced amongst them the social arts. They formed them into communities; they instructed them in agriculture, in arts, and manufactures. Cadmus taught them letters, the knowledge of the Deity, the reverence due to him, and the duties they owed to each other, and to society. The Deity they worshipped in his attributes; and the sun, the moon, and the stars ranked foremost in their theology. The Curetes or warriors, instructed them in feats of arms, and in the warlike dance. Virgil calls Crete *ora Curetum*—"Et tandem" (says he) *antiquis Curetum allabimur oris.*" Should we suppose the name of Crete to have originated from these Curetes, as Virgil seems to hint, our language would wonderfully explain it. *Curat* is Irish for a knight; and the *Curaithe na Croabh ruadh*, or knights of the Red-branch, were an hereditary order of chivalry, which flourished through all periods of our history. The time which this colony spent in Greece, it is agreed, was just fifty years; so that according to our mode of calculation *Sru* died in Crete, A. M. 2071, and his son *Heber-Scot* sailed for Phœnicia, the seat of his ancestors, A. M. 2096. He was received with great affection by his kindred, and the *Psalter Cashill* affirms, that he died possessed of the supreme command in Phœnicia, but was killed in battle by *Naoine*, of the posterity of *Neanuil*, eldest son to *Phœnius*.

Boamhain succeeded his father *Heber-Scot*, A. M. 2106. Great contest arose between him and *Naoine*. War and peace succeeded each other for a number of years; at length *Boamhain* fell by the sword, A. 2141. *Oghamhain* took command of the shattered forces and shattered fortune of his father, and by courage and perseverance arrived at the same degree of power. He also fell in battle, A. M. 2176, and so gave way for his son *Tait*. To him succeeded *Aghnoin*, A. M. 2211. This prince in battle engaged hand to hand with *Riffleoir*, of the progeny of *Neanuil*,
and

and slew him. This so inflamed the followers of his house, that they vowed a total extirpation to the progeny of Niul. Forseeing the impossibility of protecting themselves from the approaching storm, in a solemn council they agree to quit for ever this country of their ancestors, and having armed and fitted up their ships they proceeded to sea, A. 2240, under the command of Aghnoin, and his brother Heber presided as high-priest. Aghnoin had three sons, Ealloid, Laimh-fionn, and Laimh-glas; and Heber had Caicer, and Cing.

For a considerable time was this fleet tossed up and down; sometimes landing on some island, and, after refreshing themselves and refitting their ships, again proceeding to sea. During this period Aghnoin died, A. M. 2242, and was succeeded by his eldest son Lamh-fionn. Some time after they made for the island Carenia, being obliged so to do by a violent storm. Here they reposed themselves for fifteen months, and in this interval died Heber the high-priest, and Lamh-glas one of his nephews; and we are told were buried with great funeral pomp. His son Caicer was appointed to fill his place, and having prepared every necessary for a long voyage, and sacrificed to the gods, particularly to Neptune, Caicer was consulted as to what the fates had decreed with respect to them, and whither they should direct their course? He answered they were to steer to the westward. That the land reserved for their posterity, was the most western island in the world; but which neither they nor their issue for some generations were to possess. They, overawed by this prophecy directed their course to a country called in all our ancient MSS. Gaothlaigh-Meadhonnacha. But the voyage to this land we are told was very dangerous; first on account of latent rocks; and after this, by reason of the enchanting notes of Syrens and Sea Nymphs, whose powers of music were so bewitching as to absorb all the faculties, and prevent the mariners from doing their duty, or keeping clear of
the

the currents which insensibly brought them on these rocks. This is related in the Book of Conquests, the Psalter of Cashill, and in the Irish original of Keating, though omitted in the English translation. To avoid these dangers, by the advice of Caicer, as soon as they approached these perilous seas, the ears of the crews of all the fleet were stuffed with wax; by which means they could the better attend to the means of avoiding these rocks and quick-sands. From this simple relation it is evident they were near the Sicilian shores. The fable of the Syrens is as old as history, and is undoubtedly Phœnician; whether first invented to deter other nations from sailing through the Mediterranean, as they wished to monopolize the trade of all the world; or by way of caution to future mariners, in passing through the streights of Messina, or the Syrtes, I shall not affirm. Certain it is that the early ancients looked upon this as a dangerous passage, and it is so deemed by some at this day. Homer forgets not in his *Odyssey* to celebrate the address of Ulysses in avoiding these Syrens; who, if we may believe the poet, had power to stop ships:—

*Monstra maris Sirenes erant quæ voce Canoræ
Quas libet admittas detinuere rates.*

And near this place it was that Juno prevailed on Æolus to raise that terrible tempest against the Trojan fleet, which Virgil so poetically describes in the first *Æneid*!

After clearing these dangerous seas, our colony landed safely in Getulia, on the African coasts. They returned solemn thanks to the gods, and then proceeded to form a regular and permanent settlement, to explore the country and its ancient residents, and avail themselves of this knowledge. Lamh-fionn died advanced in years, and was succeeded by his eldest son Heber, called Glun-fionn, or of the White-knee, A. M. 2281. Our annals
record

record Heber as a prince of great abilities, bravery, and wisdom; but illustrate this character by no particular instances. It is only simply said that his son Adhnoin, called Fionn, was the next ruler of this people, who in time made way for Feabhar-glas. Next in succession was his son Neannail; he was followed by Nuaghadh; Alloid then took the lead. Earachda, Deaghfatha, Bratha were the succeeding chiefs. In the reign of Bratha, the Gadelians in council took the resolution of looking for new settlements; but the reason for this conduct is not assigned. After much peril and danger they at length happily passed the Pillars of Hercules, and landed in a large and spacious haven in Galicia. They immediately fell to work and raised breast-works and entrenchments to secure themselves and their ships from the attacks of the natives, who were a very fierce and warlike people.

According to our calculation Heber assumed the command of the emigrants, A. M. 2281; from which period to the death of Bratha were nine generations, amounting one with another to 315 years; so that his death may be reasonably resolved into A. M. 2596. It was by the dint of the sword and force of arms only, that this colony gained any footing in Spain. The Psalter of Cashill counts no less a number than fifty-four battles fought between them and the old inhabitants, during the reign of Bratha and his son Breogan.

A. M. 2597 Breogan assumed the command of this people. He completed the city began by his father, surrounded it with walls, outside of which deep ditches were cut, which in honour to this prince, was called Breogan-sciath, (pronounced Breogan-sci) or the Shield of Breogan, Sciath being Irish for a shield, and from which came the Latin Brigantia. Having thus secured the safety of his people, his next care was to erect a pharos, for the direction of shipping from Ireland and Britain, with which he had opened a considerable trade. This pharos we are told, was sup-

plied with reflecting and refracting glasses, with globes and other instruments for navigation. Keating, *in his original work*, quotes an early French writer, who affirms that this Breogan, whom he calls Brigus, was the first prince who raised revenues and built castles in Spain, and from whom the Spanish, as without doubt the British and Irish Brigantes are derived.

This gallant and warlike prince had ten legitimate children; but to his eldest, called Bille, was the supreme command assigned, A. M. 2630. He was not inferior to any of his predecessors in courage or abilities; having fought many battles with bordering nations, and always with victory. The other sons of Bille were, Breagha, Fuadh, Muirtheimhne, Sula, Cuailgne, Blath, Aibhle, Nar, and Ith. They arrived at great power in Spain, subduing many provinces; and the issue of these princes remaining in that country assumed the name of Clana Breoguin, or the posterity of Breogan, hence the Brigantes.

What other children were born to Bille we are not told; but his son Gollamh, called by way of pre-eminence Mile-Espaine, or the Hero of Spain, cuts a most conspicuous figure in our annals. So much so, that as we retain the names of Phœnians, Gadelians, and Scots, from his great ancestors; after him we are called Clana-Mile, or the posterity of the hero, hence Milesians. This young hero had greatly distinguished himself in feats of arms, in many campaigns he made under his uncles; who, if we may credit some relations, extended their arms as far as Castile, which from them was anciently called Briga. Every thing giving way to the arms of these adventurers, and peace and subordination being established, Gollamh, impatient of new laurels, solicited his father's permission to assist their Phœnician ancestors, then greatly distressed by continental wars. This proves that a constant intercourse was kept up between them for the sake of commerce and other advantages. To this request Bille consented; and with

with a well appointed fleet of thirty ships, and a select number of intrepid warriors, he weighed anchor from the harbour of Corrunna, for Syria. It appears that war was not the sole business of this equipment; for in this fleet were embarked twelve youths of uncommon learning and abilities, who were directed to make remarks on whatever they found new, either in astronomy, navigation, arts, sciences, and manufactures. They were to communicate their remarks and discoveries to each other, and keep an exact account of whatever was worthy notice. As this equipment was made in the reign of Bille, we may suppose it to have taken place, A. M. 2650.

He was received with distinguished honours by the Phœnicians; and in order to bind him the firmer to their interest, Riffleoir gave to the young Spaniard his daughter Seang for a wife. We are told that he not only repelled and defeated the invaders of the country, but greatly extended their borders, and procured for them a lasting peace. During the course of these victories he had two sons by Seang, Don and Aireach. His noble carriage, his success, and this increase to his family, so endeared him to the people, that Riffleoir, old and suspicious, became highly alarmed and jealous, lest he might attempt, as his ancestors did, to wrest the crown from his family. A council was called, and it was agreed to dispatch Gollamh privately. But secret as this resolution was taken, he got timely scent of it. He feigned an indisposition till his fleet was made ready, which was done with great privacy; and then with a chosen party he broke into the palace, putting to the sword all opposers, but particularly the ungenerous Riffleoir.

From Phœnicia he proceeded to Egypt, and offered his services to Pharoah, whose country had been assailed on every side by different invaders, but particularly by the Ethiopians. So celebrated a commander was received with open arms. He was as-

signed a distinguished part in the army; and by degrees attained the chief command. His first care was to establish exact discipline amongst the troops, and then he led them against the enemy. His measures were so just, and his orders so well executed, that success generally attended his standard. As the highest mark of gratitude and approbation, Pharoah gave him to wife his daughter Scota; Seang, his first wife, being dead. By her he had two sons born in Egypt, Heber-fionn, and Amhergin. If we suppose that his landing in Egypt was in A. 2660, his son Heber may have been born in 2665. He remained in Egypt for a considerable time after; and it is PARTICULARLY NOTED, that the literati in his train were instructed in all the wisdom and learning of the Egyptians.

But his long absence from Spain with so great a force, and the great age of his father, encouraged the borderers to renew their hostilities. The country was in the utmost distress, and he was conjured to hasten his departure. After taking leave of Pharoah and his court, he proceeded for Spain, where he at length happily arrived, and found the greatest disorder to prevail every where. The report of his return gave new courage to his people; and in some time he restored peace and happiness to the land. He commenced his command over Spain, A. M. 2670, and died in an advanced age, leaving behind him eight legitimate and twenty-four illegitimate children, besides these already mentioned; the remainder of his lawful issue were, Ir, Colpa, Arranan, and Heremon.

A. M. 2706 Heber-fionn, the first born in Egypt, was called to the succession; and in some time after he associated with him in the supreme command his youngest brother Heremon; and Amhergin was anounced high-priest. These princes governed with great prudence, and highly encouraged science and commerce; but powerful combinations of different people had distressed them
forely

forely, and to these were added great calamities by uncommon droughts and famine. Their territories were gradually subdued till at length they were confined to a narrow tract. In this distress a solemn council of all the chiefs were summoned, to determine whether they should make new efforts to recover the country, or seek some more beneficent soil. On consulting the *Sacred Books*, 2734 Amhergin reminded them of the prediction of his predecessor Caicer. Ireland was the most westerly situation: with it they carried on an extensive trade; and this he assured them was the promised land; and at this time was the prophecy to be fulfilled. These assurances of the high-priest determined their resolution, and filled them with hope and confidence. But an attempt like this was not to be made on vague reports. Ith, the son of Breogan, was pitched on to visit the country and explore its strength; and from his report were they to be directed. But before we proceed farther in our narrative, it is proper, in an age like this, to call upon the testimonies of Grecian, Carthaginian, and Spanish histories in support of what is here advanced.

C H A P. IV.

The uncommon care taken at all times to preserve the history of the voyages of the Gadelians—illustrated by, and illustrating the early Greek history—letters of the primitive Greek alphabet—objections answered—introduced into Greece long before the days of Moses.

THE foregoing narrative faithfully extracted from the most respectable of our records, is the earliest account of colonization extant, and I think the best supported. It has not only been carefully handed down from age to age by our antiquarians, but

but honoured by the pens of our greatest princes, such as Ethorial, Ollamh-fodhla, Cormoc, &c. Ireland as well in her Christian, as in her Ethnic state, deemed it the most precious monument of her glory and of her antiquity. In the severest scrutinies our annals underwent, as, in the days of Ollamh-Fodla, Tuathel, Cormoc, and St. Patrick, these truths were never doubted. St. Fiech, this apostle's earliest disciple mentions them, as well as his scholar *. The Cion-Drom-Sneachta, wrote a little earlier, minutely details them. Ceann-foala, contemporary with St. Columba confirms the same. St. Cormoc has carefully preserved them; Giolla-Caoimhain has done the same. In a word no writer of Irish history since has omitted them; and if we can procure foreign evidences to confirm these relations, it will set them forth in the highest point of view, and make the Irish chronology a kind of medium to settle with more precision ancient æras.

It is a point universally agreed upon, that the early Greeks were in a state of savage barbarity, in the most extensive meaning of the word, for a considerable time, until a set of people from Egypt came to settle among them. With these strangers came arts, agriculture, letters, legislation, and religion; but though these luminaries came from Egypt, yet it is agreed that they were not an Egyptian, but a Phœnician colony; and we have in the second chapter of this book assigned the reason of it. There is no fact in ancient history better ascertained, than that the first polishers of Greece were these Phœnicians, and that the alphabet they communicated to them consisted of no more than sixteen letters †. But though this is universally admitted, yet the Grecian historians are by no means in unison as to the time of this reformation — The substance of what they have delivered, may be reduced to

* Colgan Trias Thaumaturg.

† Herodot. in Terpsicore. Plin. Hist. Nat. lib. vii. Joseph. contra Apion. Tacit. Annal. xi. &c.

this. Agenor and Belus, whose antiquity are so remote, that, according to their fabulous manner of writing, they have made them the sons of Neptune, or the sea, early agreed to separate. Belus resided in Egypt, and married the daughter of Nilus, by whom he had children. Agenor settled in Phœnice, and became the father of a numerous race, amongst whom were Cadmus, Phœnix, and Cilix. Cadmus emigrated into Asia Minor, Crete, Greece, and Lybia, with a numerous retinue of Phœnician followers, in all which places he founded colonies, and introduced amongst them, letters, music, poetry, and other sciences.

Here we see a great number of facts collected in one point of view; but for want of proper attention to chronology, of which the early Greeks were grossly ignorant, so confounded and jumbled together, that no writer has been found hardy enough to attempt to reduce them to any historical order. Indeed Josephus * treats their pretences to history and antiquity with the highest contempt; for though (says he) “it is acknowledged that they “received their first letters from the Phœnician Cadmus, yet, for “want of public registers, they are not able to produce any testimo-
“nies of this, or indeed of any other point of high antiquity, “which might be depended on. Not so (continues he) with the “Phœnicians, the Chaldeans, and with us (the Jews), who have “from remote antiquity, by means of *registers*, and the *care of* “*persons particularly appointed to this office*, preserved our histories beyond all other nations!”

It is then manifest that this relation of the polishing of the first Greeks must have been, through neglect of these public registers, preserved by *tradition only*; and that in after periods, when the Greeks, in imitation of other polite nations of antiquity, began to cultivate history, they committed these relations, such as they

* Contra Apion.

found them to writing ; but unable to trace the precise periods of these transactions, they gave them the best form they could. Our history will however, I think to universal satisfaction, clear up these difficulties, and prove that even tradition itself in history, is not to be despised.

We see the two brothers, Agenor and Belus agree to separate ; Belus marries the king of Egypt's daughter, and settles there, whilst Agenor remains in Phœnice. Can any thing come nearer to the relations of our historians, of Niulus, the second son of Phœnius, settling in Egypt, and marrying the daughter of Pharoah, and of his elder brother's ruling in Phœnicia ? We see even the names of Phœnius and Niulus preserved also by them, though misplaced by gross anachronism ! Cadmus too, is made brother to Phœnius, though it is manifest that he flourished near 300 years after ! Thus the traditions of the remote Greeks in the main are founded in truth, and the glory of illustrating them reserved for Irish historians. Phœnius, the inventor of letters was born, A. M. 1850 : his second son Niulus settled in Egypt A. M. 1941, and Sru, great-grandson to Niulus, with his people, quitted Egypt A. M. 2046, twenty-three years after the vocation of Abraham, according to the Hebrew computation. Every other relation which the Greeks give of these early luminaries, most wonderfully correspond with our annals. Nothing can fuller prove the great antiquity of the æra in question, than the number of letters then promulgated, which consisted by universal consent of but sixteen, and in our alphabet *at this day* we have but seventeen. These original letters, by the consent of Pliny, Eusebius, Plutarch, &c. were the following : A, B, F, Δ, E, H, I, K, Λ, M, N, O, Π, R, Σ, Υ, every letter of which we possess, except the H ; and indeed, durst I venture an opinion on this head, it would be, that the H was not one of these original letters. In the rude state of languages it were absurd to suppose six vowels in sixteen

sixteen letters ; but that one of these should be a short, and the other a long E ought not to be credited ! for the additional E, like the additional O, must have been introduced in the more polished and luxurious state of the language. Instead of the long E, I judge the T must have been substituted, it being a letter absolutely necessary in every state of a language. This being granted, and I think a most just concession, we shall clearly see that the early Greek letters, which they called Phœnician *, to distinguish them from the additional ones afterwards introduced, and these used by us at this day are the same ; for I am satisfied that our alphabet originally consisted of but sixteen letters, the F being a manifest interpolation of later times, the P answering every purpose for which it is used, except its total aspiration.

But before we proceed farther, and to be certain of the ground we go on, it is highly proper to advert to some very specious modern objections to the voice of antiquity, on the small number of the original Greek letters. Messrs. Le Clere † and Goguet ‡ seem to ridicule this opinion, and to laugh at the accounts of the additional letters of Palemedes, of Simonides, and of Epicharmus ! For say they, all these letters must have been adopted at the same time ; because original Greek words, as old as the very language itself, can nor could not be wrote without these supposed additional letters. But when these gentlemen shall be instructed, that there is at this day a nation in Europe (I mean Ireland) whose entire alphabet consists but of seventeen letters ; and that very many words cannot be pronounced by these letters, without changing their sound, which is produced by an auxiliary H after, or a dot (·) over such consonant, what will become of their objections ? and yet had we not so glaring a proof to the contrary, I own, I

* Herodot. in Terpsicore.

† Bibl. Chois. tom. ii. p. 39.

‡ L'Origin des Loix, des Arts, & des Sciences, tom. iv. p. 68.

think it hard, that the evidence of all antiquity should be rejected by plausible cavils of modern sceptics !

For want of fixing with precision the time of Cadmus's introducing letters into Greece, many mistakes have happened. The very learned Jones * is greatly at a loss to account for Cadmus's alphabet having but sixteen letters ; whereas (says he), in the days of Moses who preceded him, the Hebrews had *then* twenty-two ! It however appears evident by our annals, that Cadmus was prior to Moses by above four centuries ; after which period, it is not improbable but that the Phœnicians might have augmented their alphabet ; whilst the first emigrants and their posterity, *even to this day, religiously preserved the pure original one.* It appears from history, that not only the Greeks, but most European nations, borrowed from us their alphabet. Wormius † tells us, his countrymen's alphabet was called Ira-Letur, or Irlandorum Literæ ; and to this day the Germans, and all the northern nations call a letter Buchtat, and Bogstav, which names are accounted for, because every letter of our alphabet is the name of some particular tree. The early Britons and Cornish adopted our letters, and after them the Saxons. Nay, the northern Scots, who still speak and write the Irish, like all these others we have mentioned, in time changed their alphabet, for the one now generally received, and freely adopted all its letters ; whilst the Irish, *stedfast and immoveable*, never suffered the least innovation in theirs ! But besides the small number of letters in our alphabet, the ancient order in which they were placed, differing from that of all other nations, is a still greater proof of their originality, and of their antiquity. The Phœnician letters of the Greeks, and the Irish, in their original order, will appear in the next chapter.

* De Studio veræ Theolog. p. 296.

† Literæ Runicæ, cap. 5.

C H A P. V.

The Cadmean letters of the Greeks and the Irish, in their original order—the Greeks supposed to possess an occult manner of writing—figure of the Irish Ogham—proofs and reasons offered, to shew that the Gadelian colony were the first reformers of Greece.

The Beth-Luis-Nion, or Irish
Letters.

LETTERS.	N A M E.
b, b	Beith.
l, l	Luis.
N, n	Nuin.
p, p	Poth.
s, s	Sail.
δ, δ	Duir.
τ, τ	Tinne.
C, c	Colt.
m, m	Muin.
ḡ, ḡ	Gort.
R, r	Ruis.
q, a	Ailim.
O, o	On.
u, u	Uilleán.
e, e	Eadha.
J, j	Jodha.

The Phœnician or GREEK
Letters.

LETTERS.	N A M E.
B, β	Beta.
Λ, λ	Lambda.
N, ν	Nu.
Φ, φ	Phi.
Σ, σ	Sigma.
Δ, δ	Delta.
Τ, τ	Tau.
Κ, κ	Kappa.
Μ, μ	Mu.
Γ, γ	Gamma.
Ρ, ρ	Rho.
Α, α	Alpha.
Ο, ο	Omicron.
Υ, υ	Upsilon.
Ε, ε (probably the ancient)	Eta.
Ι, ι	Iota.

Besides this alphabet, the early Greeks we have reason to suspect had also an occult manner of writing, like our Ogham, or Sacred Character. For Pausanias says, that the coffer of Cypselus, preserved in the city of Elis, had on it inscriptions IN OLD CHARACTERS, and STRAIGHT LINES. We shall exhibit a scheme of our Ogham, correspondent with the above alphabet; as it may probably elucidate this remarkable passage of Pausanias.

b, l, n, p, s.	6	7	C	m	3	R	2	o	u	e	j	€	4	0	5	U	4	1	4	40
I, II, III, IIII, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	I, II, III,	I, II, III,	I, II, III,	II, III, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	II, III, IIII,	X	O	U	#					

In this character, the ancient Druids committed their mysteries to writing, and some MSS. are yet preserved in this style. The reader will easily perceive that the letters placed over these different figures, are only for the instruction of learners in this Ogham, and not used by adepts in it. Mac Curtin, an hereditary antiquarian, of the county of Clare, about forty years dead, tells us, in his Irish Grammar, that he has met with no less than thirty-two ways of writing this Ogham, so common and well known was it *even then*! The Irish had besides this, other occult manners of writing by fixing on one or two consonants, and forming from them a new alphabet. A great pity it is, that they, and other learned nations of antiquity, did not study perspicuity in writing, rather than obscurity. The Greeks made use of another manner of writing which they borrowed from the Phœnicians, and called *Βουσποφῆδον*; the meaning of which is, plowing with oxen; as, like the ridges of a plough, it went in parallel lines from right to left, and from left to right. The Cionn fa Eite, or head of the ridge, and Cor fa Chasan, or reapers path, still met with in numbers of old Irish parchments, seem to have been formed on exactly the same plan, and wrote after the same manner;

manner; so that we may presume that the early Greeks borrowed this mode of writing also from our ancestors.

In old Greek, as well as in old Irish, a single letter stood for an entire word; a circumstance, as far as I know, not to be found in other languages. A, amongst the Greeks signified greatness, and in Irish it imports an hill, or ascent. The Greek H denoted length, and I suppose E shortness. In Irish E is understood for wretchedness. The Greek O meant roundness; in Irish an ear, also a son. I, in Irish is frequently used for an island, as I-Colum-Cille, or the present Ionia; it signified also an art, or science. In ancient Greece the laws were recorded in verse, as best retained, hence *Nóμος*, which signifies a law, denotes also a song. Not only the antiquities and laws, but the druidical mysteries of the Irish were preserved in verse. If the Greeks had their Ithmian and Olympic games, the Irish had theirs also, at Tailtean, in Meath, but I judge with infinite more splendor; and they continued with us from the earliest periods to the dissolution of the Irish monarchy in 1175.

It was a Greek custom to entertain their guests for many days, before they enquired even their names. Thus Telemachus and his companions were entertained by Menelaus; and Paris and his associates remained with him ten days before he enquired who he was. But Cretan hospitality was highly celebrated. In their public assemblies were two apartments, the first of which was for the entertainment of strangers, who were served before the king or his nobles. It is unnecessary to remind our readers that HERE our ancestors principally resided during their stay in Greece. As to Irish hospitality, it was so celebrated as to become proverbial. It became an object of state policy; and laws and regulations were made by the national council for its conduct. Lands in every part of the kingdom were allotted for its support; and the Biatachs, or keepers of houses of hospitality, were the

third

were the third order in the state. Each Biatach must possess seven townlands, each of which comprehended seven ploughlands. He was obliged to have seven ploughs at work in the seasons, and to be master of 120 herds of cattle, each containing 120 cows. He was to have four roads to his house; a hog, beef, and mutton were always to be ready for the traveller and stranger; and of which houses no less than 1800 belonged to the two Munsters! In the present age of Pyrrhonism, all these facts might be well doubted, had we not modern evidences to corroborate them; for, Sir John Davis, attorney-general, in the reign of James I. in his account of the *blessed reforms* made in the lands of the Irish, in the counties of Monaghan, Fermanagh, and Cavan, *in those precious days*, by the inquisition then taken it appeared, that the county of Monaghan *alone* contained 100 Balle-beatachs, to the support of which were allotted by Mac Mahon, lord of the soil, 96,000 acres of land! Even at this day individuals keep up this spirit of hospitality; and the reader will be enabled to judge what the dispositions of our people are, from what is *now* the practice of the middling and poorer Irish, in Munster and Conaught. Their houses are open for all poor strangers. As soon as one enters and places himself by the fire, he looks upon himself, and the people look upon him so much one of the family, that he will rise to welcome the next comer. Whatever the house affords they freely partake of. In some places, in cold wet nights, a door is left open, and a large fire burning for the use of any distressed passengers! I mention these facts, because in all probability the very remembrance of them will be forgot by the next generation.

Hesychius tells us, that Βέλαι in old Greek, signified Ἡλῖος, or the sun; and that in Crete they worshipped this planet, under the name of Abellus; how near to our Bel, or the sun! But, besides what has been advanced, we have other evidences to direct us, who these luminaries of the Greeks were! for Diodorus
tells

tells us, that very many words of these people were preserved in the Greek language, even to his days, but particularly with regard to their religion. Of this I have given some instances in my *Introduction*, and in Dr. O'Brien's Irish Dictionary, are many more. The gods of these strangers he tells us, they called Cabiri, which they worshipped in groves; and Cobhar is Irish for aid or assistance. In their groves they gave out oracles; and most probably, on the reception of Christianity, when druidism fell into disrepute; the word Cabaire, which before denoted a divine inspiration, was then *first* applied, to signify an idle prating fellow, and as such it stands in our Dictionaries at this day. Add to this, that some places in Ireland yet retain the name, as Cabara near Dublin, &c. He tells us also, that the warriors of these strangers were called Curetes; and Curat is Irish for a knight, a most renowned order of which flourished in Ulster for very many centuries, called Curaithe na Craobh-ruadh, or knights of the Red-branch. Plato in Cratyl. tells us, that the sun, moon, and stars, were the deities of the first reformers of Greece; and in a former chapter we have so abundantly proved this worship to be that of our ancestors, that it would be but mere tautology to say more on that head here.

Not only the Greeks, but most other ancient writers, amongst whom is Josephus, are unanimous, that the Phœnician Cadmus, was the first improver of Greece. We have not however from Irish history any records of this name. It appears, that the conductors of the Gadelian colony from Egypt to Greece, were Sru, and his son Heber. That Sru must have had more children cannot be doubted; and that the next to the heir of the crown, was the high-priest, who was also chief of the literati, we know was a rule observed by our ancestors, from the days of the great Phœnius. Cadmus, I do suppose—nay I must conclude—was a second son to Sru, and of course filling this station; and as it was a constant

stant custom to bestow on our ancestors, some epithet expressive of their greatest talents, so it is much more than probable, that they called this prince Cadmus, or the first adviser or instructor, from Cead, first, and Meas, advice, in commemoration of his having first advised, instructed, and reformed these people.

C H A P. VI.

History of the Hyperborean island—Ireland the country alluded to—of Abaris the Hyperborean—great lights thrown on these relations—objections to them removed.

HAVING I flatter myself proved in as clear a manner, as the nature of the enquiry will admit of, that our ancestors were the first reformers and improvers of Greece; and having from this investigation determined some controverted points in Grecian chronology, as well as illustrated some fabulous and obscure parts of their history, and also demonstrated, that this country was well known to their early poets; I shall now shew that their remote *historians were well acquainted with these facts*, notwithstanding the hyperbole, of which these writers were so fond.

Aelian tells us *, that Hecateus of Abdera, a very ancient writer, compiled the history of the Hyperboreans, which work is also cited by the Scholiast upon Apollonius; and Diodorus Siculus †, from Hecateus, gives us the following description of that country.—“It is (says he) a large island, little less than Sicily, lying opposite the Celtæ, and inhabited by the Hyperboreans.

* De Nat. Anim. lib. ii. cap. i.

† Lib. iii. cap. 11.

“The

“The country is fruitful and pleasant, dedicated to Apollo, and
 “most of the people priests or songsters. In it is a large grove,
 “and in this a temple of a round form, to which the priests often
 “resort with their harps, to chaunt the praises of their god
 “Apollo. They have a language peculiar to themselves; and
 “some Greeks have been to visit this country, and to present
 “valuable gifts to their temples, with Greek inscriptions. From
 “this famous island came Abaris to Greece, who was highly
 “honoured by the Delians. They can shew the moon very near
 “them, and have discovered in it large mountains, and the
 “priests and rulers which preside over their sacred temple, they
 “call Boreades.”

Critics and commentators have formed varieties of conjectures
 on the above passage, nor are they less agreed in opinion where
 to fix this Happy Island; and yet the description appears to me
 so clear, that I only account for these diversities in opinions, from
 want of a well wrote history of Ireland. It being by Hecateus
 placed opposite the Celtæ, makes it evidently in the Atlantic
 ocean, since Europe was given as a possession to the sons of
 Japhet, and that no other island can be found to answer its size
 and description but Ireland; and this likewise evinces, what we
 have already observed, i. e. that the Irish boast their descent from
 the Scythians, since we now see clearly, that Hecateus placing
 these islanders opposite the Celtæ, must be to shew they were a
 different people from the Celtes; these being the descendants of
 Gomer, but the Scythians of Magog. And here I will introduce
 some other proofs of the early Greeks knowledge of this distinction.
 Suidas, under the word Abaris, tells us very particularly, hat this
 famous priest came from Scythia to Greece, and from thence to
 the Hyperborean Scythians. From this account it is very singu-
 lar, that he makes the Hyperboreans a Scythian colony; a dis-
 tinction which we have always made—“Scoti sumus, non Galli,”

was the answer of our ancestors, to such as attempted to make them and the Gauls one people! and here we must—indeed with astonishment—remark, how wonderfully our history elucidates the above, otherwise seemingly obscure passages, which could not be possibly made, but by a people, amongst whom a memory of our antiquities remained!

We see then by Hecateus, that this Hyperborean island, was fruitful and pleasant; and on account of its temperature, dedicated to Apollo; and this is confirmed by Pindar, who calls them—*Δᾶμον Ὑπερβορεῶν Ἀπολλωνῆος Θέραποντα*—“the servants of the Delphic god”, whose country he assures us, was — *Χθονα Πνοιᾶς ὅπιθεν Βορέα*—i. e. “a land placed beyond the chilling “northern blasts.” And Callimachus calls them *Ἱερὸν Γένος*, or the sacred nation! Herodotus too, who is sometimes called the Father and Prince of historians, tells us*, that on account of their humanity and goodness, they were held as sacred by all their neighbours. How well Ireland, even at this day, answers these encomiums, notwithstanding the inexpressible hardships which her ancient children have LONG groaned under, need not be told; how much better it did in days of JUSTICE and SOUND LEGISLATION, the following picture of it, drawn about 1400 years ago, by Donatus, bishop of Tiesoli, near Florence, will shew.—

Finibus Occiduis, describitur optima tellus

Nomine and Antiquis, Scotia scripta libris.

Insula Dives Opum Gemmarum, vestis, & Auri:

Commoda Corporibus Aëre, Sole, Solo.

Melle fluit pulchris, & lacteis Scotia Campis

Vestibus, atque Armis, frugibus, Arte, viris.

* Lib. iv. feu Melpomene.

Urforum Rabies nulla est ibi ; sacra leonum
 Semina, nec unquam Scotica terra tulit.
 Nulla Venena nocent, nec Serpens serpit in herbâ ;
 Nec conquesta Canit, garrula rana lacu ;
 In quâ Scotorum Gentes, habitare merentur :
 Inclyta Gens Hominum, Milite, Pace, Fide !

A great mistake has however risen, from the name given by Hecateus to this island, it being supposed from it to imply a northern people ; hence some moderns have placed it under the arctic pole, and beyond the Riphæan mountains ; yet though the later ancients seemed to consider the meaning of the word in this sense, it is nevertheless very curious that they still considered Ireland as the country alluded to. Hence they have supposed it is called Hibernia, ab Hiberno Acre, from its coldness ; and this will explain why Claudian in his panegyric on Stilichon, tells us, that,

Scotorum Cumulus flevit *Glacialis Ierne* ;
 and in an other line in the same poem, where he mentions the numbers of Irish, who invaded Britain at that time—

Fregit *Hyperboreas*, remis Audacibus Undas !
 from which we may safely affirm, that when even a knowledge of the nature of the climate was lost, still a remembrance of the people, alluded to under this title, was preserved. Indeed the analysis of the word will plainly prove, that Hecateus meant by it, a country peculiarly blessed by nature—ὑπερ βορέων—beyond the northern blasts, or out of their reach ! Thus Orpheus called it Ἱέρνη, or the Holy Island ; Homer, Ogygia, or the most Ancient Island ; Solon, and Plato, Atlantis, or excelling all other islands

in that immense ocean ; and Hecateus, Hyperborea, or the most temperate of islands ! all poetical and figurative appellations, and all evidently alluding to the same country.

By the large grove in which they worshipped, and their temple being circular, we clearly see the Druid rites pointed at, and the circular stone pillars in these groves, of which many are yet to be seen, and some so near to Limerick as Bruff. He says, most of the people were priests or songsters. That there were vast numbers of the first we may judge from the great number of religious here, in the dawn of Christianity ; inasmuch that then, and for many centuries after, they were more active in planting the new doctrine abroad, than all the rest of Europe combined. As to their Bards, no nation in the world indulged them more than the Irish. Every family had one or more ; every general was attended in the field by his bard ; every prince had a number ; lands were allotted to them by the states. In all wars and dissensions, their houses, their persons, and their effects were inviolate. They were exempt from public taxation, or any other hardship which might seem to clog or restrain their genius. These great privileges at length induced so many idlers to enlist under their banners, that, in one or two instances, the state wisely reduced their number, but never attempted suppressing the order. As to music, the ancient Irish excelled all others in it. Cambrensis himself bestows the greatest applause to their powers in harmony ; and as for the harp, need I say more on it than this, that they became so fond of it, as to make it the arms of Leinster. As to the Greek inscriptions, many such, as well as Hebrew ones, Sir James Ware acknowledges to have met, and numbers still are dispersed through the kingdom. Their being able to bring the moon near to them, and shew in it many mountains, plainly points out the use of the telescope, and highly illustrates the account

count we have already given of the Tor Breogan, and of the knowledge of the ancients.

Abaris, says Hecateus, came from the Hyperboreans to visit Greece; and though a barbarian in dress, as Himerus the sophist (apud Photium, p. 1136) observes, yet he spoke Greek with so much eloquence, that you would have thought you had heard an orator in the midst of the Lycæum. Now it is certain that the dress of the Scythians as described, exactly agreed with our ancient one; and as he was highly celebrated for his great skill in divination, one of the excellencies of our ancient Druids, and that his name is pure Irish and peculiar to this country, I think it gives the highest proof to the whole relation, for Heber has been from the earliest times a name peculiar to our princes and great men. Heber-Scot, led the Phœnician colony from Greece to Scythia; several others of the name were his successors. Heber was the first monarch in Ireland of the Milesian race. Another of the name preceded St. Patrick, in the Irish mission, and even refused to acknowledge Patrick as apostle of Ireland for a time; for, says the great primate Usher*, “*Ibarus vero nullâ ratione*” “*consentire S. Patricio, neque ei subjectus esse voluit. Nolebat*” “*enim PATRONUM HIBERNIÆ de aliâ gente habere; Patricius*” “*enim de gente Britonum natus est.*” See then how easy the converting the name Heber, into Abaris!

We have no records in Irish history to determine at what time this famous embassy of Abaris was; and the Greeks by no means agree as to the period. Without entering too minutely into an enquiry so little interesting, we may I think safely affirm, that it must have been at a very early date. Vossius†, who seemed to bestow no small time and trouble to settle this matter, places him before the days not only of Pythagoras, but even of Solon.—

* Britan. Eccl. Antiq. p. 801.

† De Poet. Græc. cap. 3.

“Antiqui

“Antiqui omnes (says he), de *Abari* a loquuntior, ut non *Pythago-
gora* modo, sed Solon etiam antiquior.” If this be admitted—and indeed I think it ought—we may be better enabled to explain Solon’s account of the famous Atlantic island; which might probably be preserved amongst the Athenians, where it is known Abaris long resided; and that in Egypt, this legislator might have continued his enquiries after these famous islanders. But after all that has been said, it may justly be demanded, if the ancient Irish were these extraordinary luminaries so celebrated by antiquity, but particularly by the early Greeks, how reconcile this, to the picture given of them by their successors? Strabo * tells us, that the Irish were the most abominable and detestable of people. That they devoured human flesh, even that of their parents; committed incest, &c. Amongst the Latins, Mela and Solinus are equally severe, in the short accounts they have left of this people. But the account they give of the country itself, is the best defence of its inhabitants; for they tell us, it is cold, bleak, and inhospitable, scarce affording trees or vegetation, much less milk or honey!

However celebrated the Greeks may have been, at a remote period, for commerce and navigation, yet it is certain after their conquest by the Romans, they were no longer considered in that light. Indeed the Carthaginians possessing all the avidity for commerce and gain, of their Phœnician ancestors, seemed to have monopolized the most considerable part of the then trade of Europe, as indeed they did of the rest of the world, into their own hands. Nor does it appear that the Romans themselves, after the destruction of Carthage, gave much attention to commerce; nay so little did they know even of Britain, notwithstanding Cæsar’s conquest of it, and the different Roman generals who

* Lib. ii.

afterwards governed there, that it was not till the reign of Domitian that they observed it to be an island! so little informed of a country in their possession for more than a century, we must not be surpris'd if subsequent writers grossly misrepresented a nation, the avowed enemies of Rome. Instructed, that every thing should submit to Roman power, they represented whatever oppos'd this darling opinion in the most unfavourable light. If the ancient Irish were the savage nation these writers describe them to be, we should be able to trace some remains of it. But even at this day, though DOUBLED by *the hard hands of oppression and tyranny*, the very common people display more innate virtue, bravery, and hospitality, than those of any other nation of Europe!

But we will be less surpris'd at this account from these writers, when we reflect on the treatment we have received from British writers, even in this enlightened age. We see our historians have affirmed that the Welsh are the descendants of our Breotan, as the people of Devon and Cornwall are of our Tuatha da Danaans, and the Brigantes from Breogan grand-father to Milesius. The Venerable Bede extols in the highest manner, the learning, the sanctity, and munificence of the Irish nation; and acknowledges that by them the Saxons were converted to Christianity, and instructed in letters. Nor is Camden less diffusive in his acknowledgement of the bounty and humanity of our ancestors; yet this same Camden, the moment he enters upon that part of their history, in which they oppose English tyranny and oppression, declares them a cruel and barbarous people, though still adhering to the same laws and customs, which made them so conspicuous in times of freedom and independency! Nor have subsequent British writers, from that period to this day, blush'd at pouring out the most illiberal and unjust abuses on our country and her gallant sons. This being the case with the South Britons,

Britons, what shall I say of their northern neighbours? this people, though confessedly an Irish colony, protected and supported by the mother in times of distress, and at length, through her means, arriving at the supreme command of that country—the Irish the vernacular tongue through the whole state, two or and three centuries ago, and still the language of one half—yet North British writers have, within a century past, been even, if possible, more scurrilous and severe than their southern neighbours. Thus much I hope will suffice for an eternal answer to all the arguments drawn from Strabo, Mela, and Solinus.

CHAP. VII.

Mistakes of later Irish writers, with respect to the voyages of their ancestors—the names of places and passages still so well preserved as to point out the exact line—their landing in Cyprus—the fable and name of the Syrens explained—settlement in Getulia, before the days of Joshua—called a Scythian colony—of Carthage—retire to Galicia—of the ancient Brigantium, and the Spanish history of it.

FROM the landing of the Gadelian colony in Phœnicia, the seat of their ancestors, till the final quitting it by their successors, affording us no opportunity of illustrating ancient history or chronology, we shall pass by, but shall pay a proper attention to their expeditions from thence to their final dereliction of Spain.

Having constantly in their thoughts the Scythian origin of the Irish nation, our Senachies, or antiquarians, have fallen into great mistakes

mistakes in their manner of conducting them, from this Scythia to Spain. That the descendants of Magog by degrees extended themselves over almost illimitable tracts of ground, both in Europe and Asia, cannot be doubted; but at the very early period of which we now speak, it were absurd to suppose them numerous enough for such extension. Yet our later writers, though treating of times so remote, kept still before their eyes the interior seats which their successors many centuries after possessed; and thus, by false reasoning and false geography, brought them into Europe by ways impassable; and to prove this, I only refer to Dr. Keating, who has taken uncommon pains to prove the practicability of these wonderful travels.

But whilst they have so grossly mistaken the voyages which the Gadelian emigrants pursued, it is very singular that they never once attempted to alter or corrupt the names of the different places, which the earlier and better informed writers tell us our ancestors landed in, in their passage to Spain; and by this means have enabled us with precision AT THIS DAY to determine them. And first, we are told they landed in the island of Cherena, where they remained a year and nine months, in which time two of their chiefs died. Now it is very singular, and proves in the highest degree the exactness of these very early relations, to find by Josephus * and other ancient writers, that the old name of Cyprus was Cherine! and this of course proves their passage was through the Mediterranean. Here follow more proofs. After quitting Cherena, and being tossed about the seas for a considerable time, they prepare oblations to Neptune, and consult the oracles through their chief-priest Caicer, to know where they shall direct their course; and he directs them to the most western part of the world. Soon after this we are surprised with the

* Lib. i. cap. 6.

relation of a dangerous passage, occasioned by the artful notes of Syrens and Sea Nymphs, which, by lulling the people to sleep, endangered the destruction of the whole fleet; and to prevent the effects of which, by the advice of Caicer, their ears were stuffed close with wax. This clearly alludes to their sailing by Sicily, a passage, by the consent of all the ancients, deemed highly dangerous. Some have endeavoured to account for the origin of the fable of the Syrens from the number of caverns on the adjacent shores, and the different vibrations and passages of the winds producing a strange kind of melody, not unlike the Æolian harp. It is agreed that the fable of the Syrens is Phœnician, as well as the name. Should we derive this last from the Irish, Sigh a fairy, and Abh-ran (aran) a song, it will support the assertion; and should we advance that this relation gave rise to the fable, I persuade myself it may be well defended. Not only Sylla and Charybdis, but the Syrtes on the African coasts were very formidable to the ancients. The stopping the people's ears with wax, for fear of being lulled to sleep by the voice of these Syrens, was an excellent expedient to prevent any part of the crews of the different ships from sleeping till they cleared these dangerous coasts. This was a political and simple expedient; soon after which we read of their safe arrival in Getulia.

From what has been delivered in the two preceding chapters it has, I think, been clearly proved, that the very early Greeks were WELL acquainted with the history of these voyages and conquests of our ancestors, though we see, according to their manner, immersed in fable and invention. We may from thence presume, that they furnished Homer with the ground-work of his *Odyssæy*, as well as Orpheus with that of the *Argonautics*; since both of them send their heroes towards Ireland, a country seemingly very remote from the scenes of action of their heroes. Jason, this last tells us, with his followers, SAILED BY IT; and Homer, after a
passage

passage of ten days, reposes his hero in it, with Calypso. The relation of Ulysses's passing by Sicily is highly improved from the original, and most poetically embellished by the bard. Upon the whole, it appears to me, that the relation of these travels of our ancestors, is, not only with respect to Irish history, a most valuable piece of antiquity, but with regard to the wonderful lights it throws on the remote histories of other nations, infinitely more so.

The country in which these emigrants arrived after the above passage, though supposed by our antiquarians to be Gothland, yet we find it in all the old MSS. spelt *Gaothluighe Mheadhona-cha*. This *Gaothluighe* by no means, as the learned O'Flaherty observes, corresponds in sound with Gothia. It is evident then, it must be the Getulia bordering on Carthage, whose inhabitants, in the days of Dido, Virgil thus describes.—

Hinc Getulæ gentes genus insuperabile Bello.

The learned Heylin * is positive (and he produces his authorities) that Carthage was a flourishing Phœnician colony long before the sacking of Troy; but what is still more to our purpose, is, that we are told that Nonus, a Greek poet (from authorities which have been long since lost), asserts, that Cadmus made a successful expedition into this part of Africa †; and this by the bye, is a farther proof from the early Greeks of our history. It is agreed upon by all writers, that in the days of Joshua, numbers of Canaanites fled from the edge of his sword to Africa; however, if credit is to be given to our histories—and I think none deserve more—it is evident that it was peopled by our adventurers at a much earlier period than the days of Joshua. *Numidia propria*

* Cosmograph. lib. iv. p. 879.

† Universal Hist. vol. xvi. p. 558. octavo.

is called by many ancient writers Terra Metagonitis. May we not then presume that the Getulia of our ancestors, was called in these early days, Getulia Metagonitis? We have seen how exactly our Cherena, and the Cherine or Cyprus of Josephus agree, as well as our name of Letania, in the days of St. Patrick, with that ancient one of Brittany. By admitting this as the ancient name of the territory in question, it will prove still fuller the accuracy of our early geographers. Had we not the collateral evidences of Josephus *, and of D'Argentre †, with regard to the ancient names of Cyprus and Brittany, it would not make the relations of our early writers less true in themselves, however doubted by the critic; and the reflection that Numidia propria, was also called Terra Metagonitis, is a sanction to the Gaothluighe Mheadhonachuagh of our ancestors, being by ancient geographers called Getulia Metagonitis.

It being the voice of antiquity, that both Carthage and Numidia were very early inhabited by Phœnician colonies; and no two writers agreeing in the times of these settlements, the records of these flourishing states being long since destroyed by the Romans—"whose virtue, generosity of soul, and love of truth" "thought proper to deny to posterity such information"—as the writers of the Universal History remark ‡; should we not gladly embrace any reasonable account, that might help to set us right in these enquiries? such is the one before us, of a Phœnician colony arriving in Africa about A. M. 2279, forming a regular settlement, and there residing for near 300 years; and the writers of the Universal History think it probable, that *long* before the days of Joshua, Phœnicians settled in Africa! The Carthaginian colony have been by ancient writers called Sidonians; and we now see, with what justice, since they must have settled there

* Lib. i. cap. 6.

† Histoire de Bretagne.

‡ Vol. xvii. p. 12. octavo.
long

long before the building of Tyre. Pliny and Mela tell us, that Cirta the capital of the Terra Metagonitis, or of Numidia propria, was also called Sithianorum Colonia; but this name is explained * by supposing it so called from a colony settled there by P. Sittius. The candid reader will however naturally suppose, that the Gadelian emigrants must have greatly encreased in 280 years; and being a commercial as well as a warlike people, that they might have planted colonies here, hence Sittianorum, or rather Scytianorum Colonia! for had it been so called from this P. Sittius, it should be more properly named Sittii Colonia, not Sittianorum. The names of places answering exactly to the ancient Irish language, strengthen these conjectures. Cirta the capital of Numidia was so called, as being the chief city; and Cathair is Irish for a city. From this Cirta we learn that Carthage took its name, and as it were a younger city; and the adjunct Oghe is Irish for a maid or virgin! The plain surrounding Carthage was called Magaria; and Mugh is Irish for a plain, and Arbhar (arar) corn. So that from this we should conclude, that Magaria was not a part of the city, but a territory annexed to it for the supply of the citizens, so as not to lie exposed to the caprice of the native Africans. The citadel built by Dido, was called Byrsa; and Bir is Irish for water, hence Birra in the King's County was so called, on account of the number of springs about it. So that we reasonably suppose, that this fortress was surrounded by water, and which we shall see was the first security given to such places in Ireland. Byrsa then may be rendered from the Irish language, SHIELDED BY WATER, from Bir, water, and Seigh, a shield! In fine the harbour of Carthage was called Cohon, and Cuan is Irish for an harbour. And here let me once for all remark, that, etymologies in general should be very cau-

* Univ. Hist. vol. xvii. p. 543. octavo.

tiously

tiously admitted, as in themselves of no great force in forming inductions from ancient history; nor should I produce them so often on this and former occasions, but that I am first warranted by the evidence of history.

After remaining in Getulia for eight generations, the Gadelian colony were led forth to make new settlements, under the conduct of Bratha; and after a long coasting voyage, they at length cast anchor in the Bay of Corunna, in Galicia, where they made an immediate lodgement, and soon after a regular settlement. The capital, which, after Breogan the son of Bratha, they called Cathair Bhreoguin, we see the Romans afterwards denominated Brigantium. From this Roman name, some have imagined Brigantium a Roman colony; but we here see it was founded long before Rome had an existence. Breogan himself built a pharos, which after him was called Tor Breogan, or Breogan's Tower; and besides a direction to shipping, it served as an observatory, in which both reflecting and refracting glasses were deposited. To suppose the ancients ignorant of the use of such glasses, would be to give the lie to all antiquity*; our ancestors, as a maritime state, must be particularly attached to the study of astronomy. Hæcateus confesses, that, by means of glasses, they could bring the moon seemingly very near them. Our own writers have asserted that by their use they first discovered the Irish coasts—some indeed have said, from this famous pharos—but that must be understood, the descrying ships at a great distance in sailing from thence.

But that this relation upon the whole, must have a foundation in truth, I collect from the following. Ludovicus Nonius † tells us, “that the Flavium Brigantium of the ancients, is modern
“Corunna; and that the natives affirm Hercules to be the founder
“of it, as well as of the tower, on the top of which, by wonderful

* Origin of Discoveries attributed to the Moderns.

† In Hispan. p. 196.

“art,

“art, a reflecting glass was placed, by which vessels at sea and at a great distance might be easily seen.” It is true he ridicules the story, affirming that ignorance of language gave rise to the mistake, and that invention supplied the rest; *Specula* (says he) which is Latin for a tower, they rendered into *Speculum*—“*Nam cum Turris illa Specula dicatur, Speculum illud, mirandum sine opifice ullo confinxere.*” But I think this explanation will not make in favour of Nonius; since those who had Latin enough to know that *Speculum* signified a reflecting mirror, could not mistake *Specula* for any thing else than a tower; besides, here is Irish history to confirm both the history and tradition of the country. Such relations as this are far from being rare in ancient history. We are told, that by means of a mirror placed on the Colossus of Rhodes, ships going to Syria and Egypt could be easily descried. Who has not heard of Archimedes’s burning-glasses, by which he set fire to the Roman fleet? or of another recorded by Leo *, erected on a round tower at Alexandria, by one of the Ptolemies, which upon being uncovered before the sun, could burn ships at a distance. So that we may affirm, that our Senachies were well authorised to declare, that glasses were used in the Tor Breogan, and that Ireland was first seen by some of them, brought for that purpose by Ith, in his voyage thither. And to justify the arts and sciences they brought with them *here*, we have only to remind our reader that Milesius, in his expedition to Phœnicia and Egypt, had in his retinue twelve youths of the greatest abilities, to be instructed in the arts, learning, and manufactures of Phœnicia and Egypt.

* Descrip. Afric. p. 356.

B O O K III.

C H A P. I.

Ith lands in Ireland to explore the country—is appointed umpire between its princes, and is highly careffed—suspected for a spy—is attacked and mortally wounded, and most of his party cut off—the remainder return to Spain.

WE observed in chapter the third of the last book, that in a solemn council held in the Tor Breogan, by the sons of Milesius, it was unanimously resolved by them to invade Ireland with all their power, and to subdue the country; and that Ith was first to proceed on discoveries, and to make remarks on the strength of the natives, their different dispositions, and the best places for landing troops. Accordingly, early in the next year, in a stout large ship, well equipt for such an expedition, with an 150 select men, commanded by his son Luaghaidh, besides the crew to work her, he set sail from Brigantium or Corunna, with a fair wind for Ireland, and after coasting the country, he at length landed at a place called Daire-Calgach, (the present Derry) in the North. My reason for determining this the place of landing, is, because the people, on enquiry, told him that the Danaan princes, who then ruled Ireland, were at Oileach Neid, not far distant. Now this was a very ancient palace of the kings of Ulster, in the peninsula of Inis-oen—probably the Tor Conuing of the Africans—and not far from Derry. After landing his troops, he immediately sacrificed to Neptune, the favourite marine god

god of this people. For, as we before observed, the very name is Irish, from Naoph, or Naomh, sacred, and Ton, a wave. The omens were not propitious, but he was not to be discouraged. Numbers of the inhabitants went out on his landing, to know who this adventurer was, and what his business. He immediately answered them in the Irish language, that he and they were from one common stock, being both the descendants of Magog; that distress of weather, and want of provisions, threw him on their coast; and that the laws of affinity, as well as of hospitality, pleaded in his cause and that of his followers.

Here we see to demonstration the Milesian adventurers well acquainted with the country, its inhabitants, and their ancestry; and probably corresponded privately with the oppressed Belgæ, who certainly did assist them afterwards. We also find them speaking the same language; nor is there in history a fact better ascertained than this, notwithstanding the *flippant* assertions of some moderns, who will, on their bare authorities, have it, that all the colonies, previous to the Milesian expedition, came from Britain.

Ith and his attendants were invited into the country; and in this excursion he took care to inform himself very minutely of every thing necessary for him to know. Being told that the three sons of Cearmada Moir-bheoil, who then jointly ruled Ireland, were at Oileach-Neid, in order to agree about an equal partition of the crown jewels, he resolved to pay his respects to these princes. To this purpose he waited on them, at the head of 100 of his men; and conducted himself before them with such discretion and wisdom, that they agreed to make him umpire between them; for it was apprehended that this dispute would end in a civil war. In the distribution of these jewels he displayed such regard to justice and impartiality, that the brothers became quite reconciled to each other, and highly pleased with him. Upon taking

his leave he strongly recommended a lasting love and union amongst them; extolling to the skies the beauty, the fertility, and the temperature of the clime, and wondering how princes blest with the rule of such a country, could harbour any thing in their breasts but joy and festivity.

After his departure they began to reflect on the high encomiums he bestowed on the country. They were no doubt sufficiently informed by himself of the situation of his own people in Spain; and from these and other suspicious circumstances—probably his tampering with the Belgæ—they became convinced that his landing in Ireland, and exploring the country so closely, and with such a large body of men, must proceed from very different motives to those he assigned: in short that he came as a spy; and that if he returned, he would make such a report as would induce his friends on the continent to invade the country. They therefore judged their security depended on cutting him off, and his whole party, before they reached their ship. This resolution was no sooner taken than put in execution. Mac Cuill or Eathoir, was immediately detached with 150 chosen men to cut off his retreat. Better acquainted with the country, he soon overtook Ith and his party, and directly commenced the attack. But Ith, judging that if he formed for a regular engagement, his whole party would be cut off by fresh troops pouring in, made dispositions for a retreat, which he continued as well as he could till he came near his ship. Here he made a desperate attack upon the enemy; but notwithstanding his intrepidity, and that of his followers, after the loss of the flower of his troops, and himself mortally wounded, with great difficulty the remains of his shattered troops retreated to their ship, carrying their general with them. The plain where this battle was fought, was from him called Mugha Ith, or the Defeat of Ith.

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Under the command of his son Lughaidh, they proceeded for Spain, and in their passage several of the wounded died, as did Ith himself; but his body was preserved till they landed at Brigantium. Here it was carried on shore in great funeral pomp, and exposed to the view of his friends and kinsmen, the better to excite their pity and their resentment. Lughaidh then gave an ample detail of the country he left, and the different inhabitants of it; assuring them of the certain success that must attend on their arms in this expedition, from their own known bravery, and from the supports they would find there. There needed not further inducements to a people already determined on invading Ireland; but they solemnly vowed to sacrifice the three sons of Cearmada, to the manes of the renowned hero Ith.

C H A P. II.

The Milesians prepare to invade Ireland—names of the principal leaders in this expedition—land in Kerry—consent to reembark and put to sea—the loss they sustained in relanding—attacked by the Danaans in their intrenchments, and repulse them—advance into Meath, and engage the whole Danaan army, which they defeat with great slaughter, and possess themselves of the country.

THE sons of Milesius, stimulated by glory, by revenge, and by conquest, were indefatigable in their preparations for the Irish expedition. Every thing being now in readiness, with a large and well appointed fleet, consisting, says the Book of Invasions *, of seventy-five ships, transports included, with

* Gabbail Clana Mile.

a large body of select troops on board, under the command of forty captains of approved intrepidity, they set sail from Brigantium. The Book of Munster does not specify the number of ships employed on this occasion *, content to observe it was a large fleet. Bruodin † makes the number of ships to be sixty-eight; Mac Geoghegan sixty ‡; and the Leabhar Lecan. (fol. 28) one hundred and fifty! From the whole we may conclude it a respectable fleet at any time, but a very great one at such a period as the present. The names of these different leaders have been carefully preserved in our annals, and we shall mention them, as many considerable places in the kingdom yet commemorate them. These were the sons of Milesius: Donn, and Aireach, born in Phœnicia; Heber-fion, and Amhergin, born in Egypt; and Ir, Colpa, Aranann, and Heremon, born in Spain. The sons of Breogan, grand-father to these princes, who attended this expedition, were Breagha, who gave the name of Magh-Breagha to his settlement in Meath; Cuala, from whom Sliabh Cuala; Cualgne gave name to Sliabh Cualgne, in the county of Down; from Bladh was Sliabh Blama, in Leinster, called; from Fuadh, Sliabh Fuadh; Muirtheimhne gave name to that plain, so famous for the defeat and death of the renowned Cucullain, in the county of Down; Nare, to Ros Nare; Eibhle, to Sliabh Eibhle, in Munster; Lughaidh, grandson to Breogan, to Corealuidhe, in the county of Cork. The four sons of Heber, Er, Dorba, Fearon, and Feargna. Four sons of Heremon, Muimhne, Luighne, Laighne, and Palp. The other commanders were, Buas, Breas, Buaighne, Fulman, Mantan, Caicer, Suirge, En, Un, Eatan, Sobhairce, Seadna, Goistean, Bille, Lui. Beside these were many ladies of the first quality, amongst others Scota, the widow of Milesius, and many noble Spaniards, who went as volunteers on on this occasion.

* Psalter Cashiot. † Propugnaet. lib. v. cap. 9. ‡ Histoire d'Irlande, p. 68.

The first land they made was Kerry; and here it was agreed in council, that the troops under the command of Heber should land, whilst those under his brother Heremon should sail to, and disembark on the Leinster coasts, the more to distract and divide the enemy. This landing was effected at Inbher Sceine, now the Bay of Bantry, and which was so called from Sceine, the wife of Amhergin, who was here drowned. From thence they marched to Sliabh-mis, where they encamped. Here, on consultation, they agreed to send ambassadors to the ruling princes of Ireland, requiring their speedy submission, otherwise denouncing against them war, with all its horrors; and as on such occasions persons of the first quality were always pitched on, Amhergin, the chief-priest, was by his brothers appointed for this embassy.

Attended by some noblemen of the first quality, the chief-priest Amhergin announced the business of this embassy, to the sons of Cearmada. These princes, after consultation, returned for answer, that they had no previous knowledge of this hostile attempt, and of course were not prepared for it. That it was contrary to the rules of war to take them thus by surprize; but if they would give proper time to collect their troops, they would then put the fate of the kingdom to the issue of a battle. After much altercation, the following terms were agreed to: namely, that Amhergin and his attendants were speedily to return; that their whole forces were to re-embark; their ships to weigh anchor, and clear the coasts. After which, if they made good their second landing, the Damnonii would deem it an equitable invasion, and either submit or oppose them, as they found most convenient.

I shall make no comments on this extraordinary agreement; but observe to my readers, that it was faithfully adhered to by the Milesian chiefs. They conveyed all their troops and provisions

visions on board, and put to sea with their whole fleet. When they had all cleared the land, and were fairly in the main ocean, they tacked about to reach the coasts they had left; but at this very critical time, a violent storm of wind at west arose, owing, say our annals, to the magical powers of the Damnonii. But let that pass as one of the many instances of pitiable credulity in our annalists, though, at the same time, of their great dread to alter the least iota in the national records; since nothing can be more absurd, than recurring to præternatural causes in accounting for facts which we know may happen, and often happen, as a westerly is a kind of trade-wind on our coasts. The wind encreasing, and want of sufficient sea room, were the sources of dreadful calamities. The galley commanded by Donn, ran into the Shannon, and was dashed to pieces beyond the Cashell, at a place which at this day retains his name, and every soul on board perished! Besides this chief, we are particularly told that twenty-four common soldiers, twelve women, four galley-slaves, fifty select warriors, and five captains, being all on board, shared his fate! The galley commanded by Ir, met the same fate on the Desmond coast. The remainder of this fleet, though much damaged, stood off to sea till the storm abated, and then relanded at Inbher Sceine; but Arranan a most experienced seaman, in the height of their distress, mounting the mast to secure some sails, which none other had the hardiness to attempt, was by the violence of the wind dashed down on the deck, where he died. The place of his interment yet goes by the name of Cnoc Arranan, though vulgarly called Cnoc Arrar, bordering on the Shannon, in Kerry. The squadron commanded by Heremon felt part of this storm, though most of them landed safely at Inbher Colpa, or Drogheda, so called from Colpa who perished here, as did likewise Aireach. Thus, by this high point of honour, of the eight sons of Milesius five perished

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in this storm, besides many ladies and captains of special note, and numbers of soldiers.

The second landing was effected on the 17th day of the month Bel, or May, and the year of the world, according to the Hebrew, computation 2736. The troops of Heber immediately took possession of their former camp, at Sliabh-mis; nor were the Damnonii in the mean time idle, since we find them collect so considerable a force as to attack his entrenchments the third day after his landing. The attack was long and bloody; but the Danaans at length gave way to superior courage, having left 1000 of their best troops killed in the trenches. The loss of the Milesians was also considerable; 300 brave fellows falling by the sword of the enemy, with two Druids, who animated them by their prayers, and two ladies, Scota, widow of Milesius, and Fais, wife to Un. The next day the remains of these amazons were interred with great funeral pomp; Scota in a vale, to this day from her called Glean-Scota, near Tralee, where a royal monument was erected to her memory. The beauty of this place has been celebrated by antiquity; but at present it appears a dreary uncultivated waste, the fatal consequences of depopulation and neglect of tillage! Fais was buried in another valley near Sliabh-mis, which yet retains the name of Glean-Fais.

Encouraged by this first defeat of the enemy, the Milesians in good order proceeded towards Inbher-Colpa, or Drogheda, to join their associates commanded by Heremon; and we cannot doubt but that in their route they were joined by many malcontents, but particularly by the Belgæ. This junction was happily effected, and now united, they send a second summons to the sons of Cearmada to surrender the kingdom, or to appoint a day to put its fate to the issue of the sword. These princes return a resolute answer, that they would die as they lived, monarchs of Ireland; and that they would meet them on the plains of Tailten, in Meath,

Meath, where the longest sword and strongest arm should determine the contest. At the time agreed on the two armies met, resolved on victory or death. Their numbers were nearly equal, as were the commanders; the three sons of Milesius, to wit, Heber, Heremon, and Amhergin, heading the invaders, whilst the Damnonii were led on by the three sons of Cearmada. The fight soon began, and continued with astonishing obstinacy from sun-rise even to sun-set, as the Book of Invasions notes. The opposing princes eagerly fought for each other, through numbers of wounded and dying enemies. At length they met. The fate of Ireland now, like that of Rome in the days of the Horatii, hung on the swords of these contending brothers! At length Mac Cuill fell by the hand of Heber-son, Mac Ceacht was slain by Heremon, and Mac Greine by Amhergin. The Danaans, now deprived of their chiefs, gave way on every side; but this had more the air of a regular retreat, than a precipitate flight. The victors wisely considering, that if the enemy now escaped, it would be the source of fresh devastations, closely, but in good order, pursued them. The Danaans made a gallant effort at Sliabh-Cualgne, so called from Cualgne, the son of Breogan, who fell in this battle; a second stand they made at Sliabh-Fuadh, so named from Fuadh, brother to Cualgne who here was slain. But more enraged than intimidated at these checks, the Milesians continued the pursuit, putting to the sword all the enemy they met, and so effectually broke them, that they were never after able to make the least disturbances in the kingdom; and such as did not passively submit to the new government, retired to Britain, possessing themselves of Devonshire and Cornwall, and carrying with them their name and language. Thus, after ruling Ireland for 195 years, under nine princes, were the Danaans completely conquered. From their history it is evident that they were a very warlike, as well as a learned people.

C H A P.

CHAP. III.

The policy and humanity with which the Milesians treated their new subjects, contrasted with the opposite conduct pursued since the Revolution, and the effects of both—partition of Ireland by the conquerors, and their attention to its improvement—Heber and Heremon engage in battle, in which Heber is slain.

THE victorious Milesians by this last battle acquired the sovereignty of the whole island, and their mode of legislation proved them worthy of it. To contrast their conduct on that occasion, with that pursued by the later Irish, since the *Revolution*, must be to pay the highest compliment to their justice and sound policy, at the expence of modern times. We have hinted in the last chapter, that the Milesians were greatly aided in this war, by the remains of the Fir-Bolgs, or Belgæ, and the event proves they were. For we find Criomthan, a man of great consequence amongst them, appointed to the government of Leinster, where they were most numerous; and it is evident that the Damnonii were still a very powerful people in Ireland, and even governed the province of Conaught, till the middle of the third century! Many noble families from both stocks yet remain in the kingdom, and are often confounded with later people. By this policy, the nation, far from being depopulated, became thicker inhabited. The cruel hand of oppression did not reduce them to despair. They were under no necessity of flying from their *fire-sides and household-gods*, to seek protection in foreign climates, and fight the battles of the enemies of their country! Though it appears that this people were completely sub-

dued, and of course not in a condition to propose any terms, but accept of such as the conquerors were pleased to impose on them; yet sound policy pointed out to these last, the utility of making them easy and happy under the new government. The Belgæ were a kind of counterpoise to the power of the Damnonii; and thus by the old maxim, divide & impera, they peaceably governed the whole. Not only this, but we see they preserved with the same care they did their own records, the history of these people!

How happy for Ireland; what millions of money, and thousands of lives might have been saved to Britain, had such principles of *equity and sound policy* governed Irish counsels for eighty years past! At the *Revolution*, the Irish submitted to the new government on terms which they purchased by the points of their swords. Never was treaty more solemnly recognised than that of the capitulation of Limerick, by which the Catholics of Ireland were secured in their civil and religious liberties! It was signed by Ginkel, king William's general, with three more general officers, and by Porter and Coninsby, lords justices of Ireland of his appointment, October 13th, 1691. It was confirmed in the fullest manner and most extensive meaning of the words, by king William and queen Mary, for themselves and for their successors, on the 24th of February following. The entire capitulation, both civil and military, with the signatures of all parties, and the king and queen's proclamation, ratifying the whole, was then published in London by *royal authority*. Not only every article of this capitulation was shamefully broke through, without the least pretence whatever; but *penal laws* of the severest nature were imposed on the people! the most determined enemies to Britain could not more effectually serve France, than her pretended Irish friends did by these proceedings. The nobility, the gentry, and the commonalty of Ireland,

now

now crowded by thousands to France; and it appears by researches and calculations made at the war-office THERE, that from the year 1691 to 1745 inclusive, 450,000 Irish died in her service *! It is the peculiar privilege of history to draw instructions as well from the bad policy, as the wisdom of our ancestors. By the moderation, equity, and sound policy of the sons of Milesius, in the year of the word 2736, the conquest of Ireland added new strength and dignity to the kingdom. Since its reduction A. C. 1691, arts, manufacturers, industry, and population have sensibly decreased; objects highly worthy the attention of modern times.—But from a digression intended for the most salutary purposes.—

We have observed, that after the death of Milesius, the supreme command of the province of Galicia, and whatever other territories belonged to it, were, by unanimous consent, invested in his two sons Heber and Heremon, in exclusion of the rest. In like manner did the supreme command in Ireland devolve on them. The learned Dr. Keating and some other writers are of opinion, that the kingdom was divided into three shares: to Heber fell the two Munsters, to Heremon Leinster and Conaught, and to Eimher the son of their brother Ir, lost on the coast of Desmond, Ulster. This I cannot agree to; and as it will assist in forming a clearer idea of our history, I shall be the more explicit in it. It is most certain that all our annals agree, that the kingdom was divided between the two brothers, Heber and Heremon, and that Amhergin was appointed high-priest, and chief of the literati. That Heber, as elder, chose the southern half, a line being drawn from Galway to the Bay of Dublin; so that the provinces of Leinster and Munster, including the present county of Clare, fell to his share, whilst those of Ulster and Conaught were the

* Histoire d'Irlande, tom. iii. p. 754.

property of Heremon. This is so true, that in every succeeding period of our history, when the house of Heber lost the monarchy, they eagerly contended for this partition. Nor was it in the days of Con, of the hundred battles, that it was first made, as has been supposed; but only determined with more precision. The Book of Invasions, the Psalter of Cashill, the Poem of Giolla Coamhain, of Torna Eigis, a writer of the fourth century, &c. are unanimous, that the island was thus divided. The Heberean half was in these remote days called Leath-dheas, or the southern partition, and that of Heremon was named Leath-thuidh, or the northern; as it has been since the days of the above Con, called Leath-Cuin, and Leath-Mogha, or Con and Mogha's shares. After this general partition of the kingdom, it is true that it suffered a subdivision; Heber assigning to Lughaidh, the son of Ith, a considerable territory in the present counties of Cork and Kerry, as did Heremon, large possessions in Ulster, to his nephew Eimher. These princes as well as the Belgian and Danaan rulers, were feudatories to the chiefs.

Certain it is, and it will appear through the course of this history, that some of the posterity of Ith, and very many of those of Ir, were monarchs of Ireland, in times succeeding the present period; but this will not invalidate what has been advanced. For it also is certain, that on every access of power, the future kings of Munster possessed themselves of the supreme command of *southern Ireland*; nor have I any doubt but that in the present partition, with it Heber had the title of monarch conferred on him. This question has been matter of contest between Irish literati, in very remote, as well as in later times. We have a poem wrote in the fourth century by Torna Eigis, chief poet to Niall the Great, contending for the pre-eminence of the northern line. In the days of James the I. Teige Mac Bruodin, hereditary historian of the O'Briens, and of North Munster, wrote in vindication of the

the claims of the *southern* line; and was replied to by Lugha O'Clery, hereditary annalist to O'Neal, and to Ulster. All these poems (in my possession) are in relation to the dispute no way important; but the knowledge they display in different periods of our history make them well worth preserving.

The nobility, the military, and the followers of these two princes, had estates and lands assigned to them, in proportion to their different ranks; but O'Naui, a celebrated musician, and Mac Cis, a bard of the first eminence, had like to have produced much trouble, each prince being fond of retaining both in his service. It was however determined by lot, when the musician fell to the share of Heber, and the bard to that of his brother Heremon; an early index of that protection which the Irish nation ever after afforded to poetry and music! nor were arts, agriculture, and manufactures less attended to. It is necessary to remind my reader, that when Milesius sailed for Phœnicia and Egypt, in his train were twelve youths of remarkable abilities, who were chiefly employed in learning whatever new arts and sciences were there found, in order to diffuse them amongst their countrymen, on their return to Spain. Many of the successors of these, as well as twenty-four farmers of the best abilities arrived in this fleet. To each farmer a certain tract of ground was allotted for cultivation; and the plains thus reclaimed at this day, bear the names of their first improvers! as high a proof of wisdom as can be supposed; since by this distinction they shewed, they knew how to prize and honour the arts of peace as well as those of war. Nor should it be forgot to the credit of our literati, that, whilst many important actions of our ancestors have been lost, yet the names of such princes as most remarkably attended to, and encouraged agriculture have been carefully handed down from age to age! Ireland was undoubtedly formerly, what China is at this day, one continued scene of tillage. The summits of
the

the most dreary mountains at this day; and most of the bogs in the kingdom when gone to a certain depth, exhibit lively traces of the plough and the harrow *! In short the ancient Irish, like the Chinese and all other polished nations, ancient as well as modern, deemed tillage the primum mobile of arts, of manufactures, and of industry.

But the present pleasing dawn was soon clouded by ambition, for, *rara concordia fratrum!* like Pompey and Cæsar, Heber could not brook an equal, nor Heremon a superior, as Lucan expresses it,

*Nulla fides, regni fociis; omnisque potestas
Impatiens consortis est.*

- 2737 Our writers tell us, that the ambition of the queen of Heber gave rise to a war, in which this prince lost his diadem and his life. On the confines of their different territories were three lovely vales, two of which were the property of Heber, the third that of his brother. Tea the queen of Heremon (we must suppose, to account for this quarrel) began to lay this out in great taste; and the other lady mortified, requested the possession of it also. Heber it appears, in compliance to his queen, solicited—but solicited in vain—this favour from his brother. However easy it may be sometimes to reconcile men, yet disputes amongst the fair are not so soon compromised! the ladies on both sides grew positive. Each engaged her husband in her cause, and this dispute, in itself of so little consequence, was the source of the most dreadful calamities, and laid a foundation for these bloody wars which, for near thirty centuries after, distracted Ireland! These altercations produced indifference on both sides; this was succeeded by coldness; hatred soon followed; and re-

* Introduction to Irish History, p. 132 to 136.

venge and war were the certain consequences. What a lesson of instruction! the contending princes, no longer to be restrained by prudence, or fraternal love, agreed to put their cause to the issue of a general engagement. Both armies met on the plains of Geisíol, in Leinster; and Heber, besides the loss of three of his best commanders, and numbers of gallant soldiers, fell also in this battle, a sacrifice to folly and vanity!

C H A P. IV.

Heremon proclaimed monarch—landing of the Picts, and history of that people—remarkable alliance between Heremon and them—he grants them settlements in Britain—landing of the Brigantes there—death and character of Heremon.

BY this decisive battle with the *northern half* of Ireland, (for the children of Heber possessed the *southern half*) Heremon became sole monarch, being solemnly inaugurated, on the famous Liagh-Fail. He confirmed Criomthan, of the Belgic line, in his government of Leinster; and Un, the son of Vighe, and Eadan who attended him from Spain, superintended the administration of Conaught. Er, Orbha, Fearon, and Feargna, the sons of Heber, succeeded to the command of the two Munsters, Conmaol, a fifth son, being yet too young. After this we read of an elegant palace erected in Meath by Heremon, which in honour to his queen, and I suppose to commemorate this bloody battle, he called Teamhuir, or the palace of Tea; and which ever after was the principal residence of the Irish monarchs.—But though the defeat and death of Heber weakened, yet they did not intimidate his faction. Caicer a principal commander of his, collected fresh troops

- troops and gave battle to the Heremonians, in which he fell, and
 2739 his party were defeated. The next year gave rise to the battle of
 Bile-tene, in East Meath, in which the high-priest Amhergin was
 slain, and Irial, surnamed the prophet, was appointed his successor.
 2746 We are surpris'd to read in seven years after, that Un and Vighe,
 governors of Heremon's own appointment, invaded Leinster, and
 were both cut off, and their army defeated by him, at the battle
 of Comhrar, in Meath.

In the reign of this Heremon and about the present period, it is universally agreed, that the Picts first landed in Ireland; not in the North, as Bede has affirmed, but in the Bay of Wexford. The Leinster coasts had been frequently annoyed and the country sometimes dispoiled by British invaders, probably some of the exiled Damnonii; and these new comers being a warlike people, Criomthan, the Leinster general, by advice of Heremon engaged in his service, to repel these bold invaders; which they effectually did, at the bloody battle of Ard-Leamhnachta. Encouraged by this success, they requested of the monarch an asylum in Ireland, from all their distresses and calamities; but this could not be granted them, as the kingdom was not even then sufficient to contain them*, and the other inhabitants. Finding the country fruitful and lovely, they formed a design to gain by treachery and force, what they could not effect by fair words. They entered into private treaty with the malcontents, which new governments never want; but however secret they imagined they carried on their schemes, Heremon was early apprised of them, and formed the resolution to cut them off in time, before they came to too great a head. Unable to oppose the impending storm, they sued for peace on such terms as should be imposed on them; requested that settlements might be allotted

* Histor. Eccl. Brit. cap. i.

them

them in Britain; observing, that by this means, they would effectually secure their own coasts for the future from foreign insults, as they would be always ready, with arms in their hands, to cut out so much work for the malcontents at home, that they would never after attempt to disturb the present Irish government. To prove the sincerity of their intentions, and their future dependance on Ireland, they at the same time requested wives from Heremon, engaging in the most solemn manner, that, not only then, but for ever after, if they, or their successors should at any time have issue by a British, and again by an Irish woman, that the issue of this last *only* should be capable of succeeding to the inheritance! and which law continued in force to the days of Venerable Bede, i. e. about 2000 years! a mark of such striking distinction, that it cannot be paralleled in the history of any other nation under the sun! The principal leader of this people on their landing *here* was Gud; but he dying, this compact was made with his son Cathluan, and from whom the Picts were also called Caledones, i. e. the posterity of Cathluan; for Don in Irish, signifies a family. The Leabhar-Lecan (B. i. p. 14.) gives us the names of his two sons, his principal warriors, his poets and his harpers. The name of his chief commander was Cruithneachan, from whom we reasonably conjecture the Picts were afterwards called Cruithnhegh by our writers. Heremon gave for wife to Cathluan the widow of Breas, one of his deceased generals; and the other Pictish chiefs had assigned to them for wives, the widows of other officers slain in war. He also engaged to support them in their new possessions in Britain, against all enemies whatever. Such was the rise of these people, whose posterity made so brilliant a figure in British history.—Invincible not only against the Britons, but even against the Romans, whilst supported and protected by the fostering hand which first gave them power and consequence; and still might continue to be,

had they steadily adhered to those who only could support them. But freed at length from foreign and domestic enemies, they had the temerity not only to attack, but for a time to expel the Irish colony from their settlements in North Britain; by which means national indignation was raised to so high a pitch against them, that, in two or three centuries after, they were so effectually destroyed, that the smallest vestige of this people, or their language, cannot be traced!

Some modern writers, often too ready to oppose their private opinions to the voice of antiquity, suppose that this landing of the Picts in Ireland must be at a later date than our annals set forth; imagining the country not THEN so populous, as Bede from us has asserted. But when it appears from our records, that it was inhabited for 790 years before; that almost every century gave it a new access of power, by swarms of new comers; as the Africans, whose posterity remained in the North, the Neimhedians, the Belgians, the Damnonii, and the present Milesian settlers—when we reflect that the Milesian fleet was also for some years employed in transporting new settlers from their acquisitions in Spain, to strengthen their power in Ireland, we must be convinced of the truth of the above account. Nay we see it further confirmed by the Clana Breoguin, or Brigantes, soon after petitioning Heremon for permission to settle in Britain, which he also agreed to; assigning to them Cumberland, or the country of hills and vallies, from which they, as well as the Welsh, were called Cumeri. Thus it appears evident, that the Britons, the Belgæ, the Damnonii, the Picts, or Caledones, and the Brigantes, were distinct British colonies, by no means to be confounded with each other, as most British antiquaries have done. The Britons or followers of Briotan, first landed there about A. M. 2380; the Belgæ, or second colony, about the year 2541; the Damnonii, A. M. 2736; the Picts or Caledones, about the
year

year 2744; and the Brigantes very soon after. This last migration certainly commenced in the reign of Heremon; he reigned sole monarch thirteen years, so that we may safely fix it at A. 2749. All these different people, the Picts excepted, were originally of one common stock, and in the main spoke the same language, making reasonable allowance for different people totally separated from each other, and the alterations which may be adventitiously introduced by strangers into their dialects in the different countries they passed through. The Picts were a people who had a language peculiar to themselves. The Venerable Bede with surprising accuracy confirms all this. He tells us positively, that the languages of South Britain were the British and Saxon in his own days, and that of the North, the the Pictish and the Irish.

After a glorious reign of thirteen years Heremon died, leaving his crown to his three sons, Muimhne, Luighne, and Laishne. He was a prince endowed with great abilities, as well for the field as the cabinet; and what added lustre to these qualities, was his exemplary justice. The unnatural war in which he was involved with his brother, it appears was not, on his part, a war of choice, but of necessity. He made no indirect use of the power which the defeat and death of his brother gave him; his nephews succeeded peaceably to the territories of their father, and peace and subordination were established over the kingdom. His speedy defeat of the Pictish plot; but above all, his converting them into the unalterable friends, instead of the determined enemies of his country, deserves the greatest applause. It is impossible to pass by this most remarkable LEAGUE, *especially at this time*, without adverting to it. South Britain, inhabited by different colonies, inimical to each other, could not be formidable to Ireland, except in times of publick confusion. If they were not the tributaries of the Irish, which

one would be apt to think, by these last assigning to the Picts, and afterwards to the Brigantes, settlements there, they must certainly dread their power. By establishing these two colonies, they at least proved what they could do. The Pictish league we see was a stronger tie than that of blood; since the Brigantes, though of the same blood with the Milesians, by degrees became reconciled to the Roman dominion, which the Picts would never hear of. Had this famous compact between the Picts and the Irish been confined to the issue of the first women only, no doubt, but in a generation or two, the affinity would be so far weakened, that they would necessarily unite with the other British colonies, in asserting their independence. But no such thing! the same laws were to be observed in all future marriages. Britons could have no temptations to form alliances with these people, when the issue of such contracts might be left destitute, and the family and fortune devolve on strangers. The Picts necessarily sought for wives in Ireland, and these cherished, in the rising generation, that love and reverence for the mother country which they themselves so strongly felt. Hence we see that the united powers of South Britain and of Rome could not shake their firmness, or dissolve that league, which they formed with Ireland; and we shall also see, that by the constant aid from thence, they were enabled not only to repel, but to invade, and in fine to destroy the Roman provinces of Britain. Without this clue of Irish history, it would be hard to conceive, how this colony could singly remain opposed to the united powers of Rome and Britain, for near five centuries; not only this, but during most of this period, to act rather on the offensive than defensive!

C H A P. V.

The reigns of Muimhne, Luighne, and Laishne—of Er, Orba, Fearon, and Feargna—of Irial—Eithrial—Conmaol—of Tighernmas—he institutes the law of colours—mines worked to great perfection—adores an idol.

TH E three sons of Heremon succeeded to the monarchy; 2750
but, instructed by the unhappy difference between their father and uncle, they agreed that each should govern a year about. Muimhne as eldest, enjoyed it the first year. Luighne succeeded, in whose administration Muimhne died; and in that of Laishne, the sons of Heber raised a mighty army, with which they engaged the Imperial troops, in the battle of Ard-Ladhan, in the county of Wexford. In this engagement the sons of Heremon fell, and their army received a complete defeat.

Er, Orba, Fearon, and Feargna, governed the kingdom but one year; for I suppose, being not well united, enabled the Heremonian faction, conducted by Irial, surnamed the Prophet, suddenly to attack and defeat them. 2754

Irial the Prophet, appointed high-priest by his father, on the death of Amhergin, ascended the throne. Prudence and justice directed his counsels. Twelve extensive tracts of ground were cleared of woods, and laid open for tillage, and took new names from the husbandmen who reclaimed them. He constructed several places of strength, erected many elegant public works, and successfully defeated some powerful invasions, particularly of the Africans, whose army he defeated, and cut off their chief commander *. After a reign of ten years he died. 2755

* Leabhar Lecan, book i. p. 19.

2765 Eithrial, the son of Irial was his successor. Instructed by the precepts and by the example of so good a father, it was impossible but he must become a good prince. Seven more expanded tracts of land became obedient to the husbandman through royal bounty, and peace and plenty smiled over the kingdom. With his own hand Eithrial recorded the history and exploits of his ancestors, from the great Phœnius; and it is more than probable that in his administration was the famous embassy of Heber, or Abaris, the Hyperborean Scythian, to the Athenians. It may be even supposed that at the same time, he sent them a copy of this famous work. We know soon after this, that the mighty Sesostris, caused maps to be drawn of the different counties he subdued, copies of which he sent to distant countries—even to the Scythians, says my author*! That such an embassy was sent cannot be doubted. It was a wise measure to renew friendship, extend commerce, and the glory of his people over Greece and Asia; and this will explain, why the memory of these transactions were preserved, even in Egypt, in the days of Solon, as we have already noted. Heber, or Abaris, the son of Tighernmas, was in all appearance this ambassador; as we know the blood royal only, were in Ireland employed in such service. But neither the learning or abilities of Eithrial could secure him from that violent death, which seemed to be the fate of most of his successors, being cut off in the battle of Rahonen, in Leinster, by Conmaol, after a reign of twenty years.

2785 Conmaol, the youngest son of Heber, and an infant at the time of his father's death, was solemnly crowned, on the Liagh-Fail, or stone of destiny. The Psalter of Cashill seems to dwell with pleasure on the exploits of this prince: a proof, even in the tenth century, how warmly these party disputes were supported.

* Eust. in fine Epist. ante Dionys. Perieg.

“ He it was (says Cormoc), that killed with his own hand Eith-
 “ rial, the son of Irial the Prophet, in revenge for the blood of
 “ his father. He it was, that fought forty-five battles against
 “ the posterity of Heremon. He it was, that slew his surviving
 “ son Pailp, and acquired the name of Conmaol, or the Prince of
 “ Chiefs, for he was superior to all others of his time !” The
 Belgæ, supporting the line of Heremon, he severely chastised ; but
 finally fell in the battle of Aonach-Macha, by the sword of Heber,
 the celebrated ambassador to the Grecian states, after a bloody
 and disturbed reign of thirty years. His burial place yet goes
 by the name of Feart-Conmaol, Feart being Irish for a burial
 ground.

Tighernmas, the son of Follain, son of Eithrial, son of Irial the 2815
 Prophet, son of Heremon, son of Milesius, succeeded to the mo-
 narchy. Notwithstanding that his government was frequently
 disturbed by the posterity of Heber, having fought them in
 twenty-seven different battles, yet we find arts, sciences, and
 manufactures encouraged. He prevented those disorders fre-
 quently attendant on people, who diverge far from their sphere
 of life, by a most wholesome though simple sumptuary law *.
 By this law, which his successors were sworn to maintain, and
 which was called llbreachta, the peasantry, soldiers, and lower
 order of people, were to have their garments of but one colour ;
 military officers, and private gentlemen, two ; commanders of
 battalions, three ; Beatachs, Brughnibhs, or keepers of houses of
 hospitality, four ; the prime nobility and military knights, five ; and
 the Ollamhs, or doctors learned in different sciences, six, being
 one less than the chief rulers ! This custom of making various
 colours in cloaths honourable, we find to be extremely ancient.
 Thus we read in Genesis, that—“ Israel loved Joseph more than

* Leabhar-Lecan, book i. p. 19.

“all his children, because he was the son of his old age, *and he made him a coat of many colours!*” This same law we find established in China, from the most remote antiquity. In this reign, mines of copper, lead, and iron were worked with great success; and a considerable gold mine was discovered on the borders of the Liffy, which Uachadan, of Cualgne, brought to great perfection. Cups and goblets of massy gold were fabricated by this famous artist, and a variety of elegant colours for the apparel of the nobility found out; amongst others, purple, green, and blue. Notwithstanding the great fame of this prince, yet he greatly debased his character by idolatrous worship. Before his time the people worshipped the sun, the moon, and stars, as types of the Deity. He erected a famous idol, in a large plain in Breffni, called Crom-Cruadh; where attending to sacrifice on the eve of Samhuin, or November, we are told that he and most of his attendants were destroyed by lightning. In commemoration of this great event, that plain is yet called Maigh-Sleachta, or the Field of Worship.

Writers are not agreed as to the length of this prince's reign. Mr. O'Flaherty * will have it but twenty-three years, whilst Grat. Lucius makes it fifty-four †. I shall however adhere to what appears to me the most rational and best authorised, on this, as well as every succeeding occasion, where I find our writers disagree in their chronology. For the famous Giolla Caomhain, a writer of at least 800 years standing, in his poem ‡ fixes it at fifty years; and in this he is followed by Keating and others.

* Ogygia, p. 196, &c.

† Cambrenf. Eversus, p. 59.

‡ Reim Riogra, MS. p. 4. quarto.

C H A P. VI.

Of Bel and Samhain, the principal deities of ancient Ireland, and of those of an inferior order—the transmigration of souls part of their doctrine—the reigns of Eochaidh, Cearmna, and Sobhairce, Eochaidh II. Fiacha, Eochaidh III. Aongus, Eana, Rotheachta, Seadhna, Fiacha II. Muinheamhoin, and Aldergoid.

HAVING had occasion to mention the idol of Tighernmas, this seems a proper place to sketch out to the reader some ideas of our national Ethnic worship. The ancient Irish, like most polished nations, adored the Deity in his attributes. They worshipped the sun, by the name of Bel, sometimes by that of its native name, hence the Apollo Grannius, an inscription found in Scotland, or Apollo, the sun, uniting as it were in this, his Irish and Roman names. Next to the sun was the moon, which the Irish undoubtedly adored. Some remains of this worship may be traced, even at this day; as particularly borrowing, if they should not have it about them, a piece of silver on the first sight of a new moon, as an omen of plenty during the month; and at the same time saying in Irish, “as you have found us in peace and prosperity, so leave us in grace and mercy.” This planet was undoubtedly worshipped by the name of Samhain; and as the feast of Bel, or the sun, was proclaimed by fires and other public rejoicings on May eve, so was that of Samhain, of the moon, the eve of November. The great temple of Samhain, was erected at Tlachta, in Meath, and that of Bel, at Uisneach. The stars they also adored. When Ugaine the Great prevailed on the national

estates to swear allegiance to himself and to his posterity, in exclusion of the other branches of the royal family, the oath they took, was—"By the sun, the moon, and stars." The same was taken to Tuathal and to his issue; and it was "By the sun, "moon, and stars," that Loagaire vowed to exonerate the province of Leinster from an heavy tribute, long paid by them. They had likewise their river and mountain deities; those who presided over hills, and these who ruled the vallies; but next to the sun and moon, Neptune was their principal deity. The oak was a tree particularly sacred to them; hence their priests were called in general Druids, from Deir, an oak; however, the votaries of Samhain, or the moon, seemed to have priests particularly appointed for this worship. They were called by both Greeks and Latins Samnothei, probably from the Irish Samhain-Dia; as being votaries of the goddess Samhain. Whoever will take the trouble to examine Plutarch's treatise De Facie in Orbe Lunæ, will find abundant reasons for supposing the worship of the moon highly cultivated *here*. The transmigration of souls and their immortality were carefully inculcated. Ruanus is said in our ancient mythology to have lived many centuries. Modhruith, employed by Fiacha Muilleathan, the Psalter of Cashill, from remote authority, tells us, remembered the reigns of nineteen successive monarchs of Ireland; and the dialogue between Oisín and St. Patrick inculcates, though born in the second century, that he was contemporary with this apostle, a thing impossible; and therefore I suppose some impostor, an old man, in his days pretended that he was Oisín, none being alive to contradict him.

In a word, the ancient mode of worship adopted by the Celtic and Scythian nations of Europe, seems evidently to have originated in Ireland. This much at least is certain, that the religion

religion of the Gauls, as delivered by Cæsar *, an indisputable authority, and such accounts as other writers, Greek and Roman, have furnished us, are in the fullest manner elucidated and confirmed by Irish history. On these matters I apprehend I have been so explicit in the first part of my Introduction to Irish History, that to it I must refer such as chose further information on a subject so essentially necessary to the investigation of *ancient European history*.

Annalists are divided in the present æra of our history. Some will have it, that there was an interregnum of seven years, when a son of Conmaol ascended the throne. Of this opinion are the learned Lynch, and O'Flaherty; but as neither the *regal list of Giolla Caomhain*, the *Psalter of Cashill*, or the *Bruodin Chronicle*, take any notice of such an hiatus in the constitution, I think myself well authorised to reject it; for, when we reflect on the nature of the succession; that the nation, from the prince to the peasant, was divided into classes; that honour and dignities were hereditary in families; and that in times of the greatest distress, particularly the Danish wars, and those that succeeded the Norman invasion, almost to our own times, these customs prevailed—in fact the constitution ceased as soon as they were discontinued—we must doubt the probability of such interregnum. Add to this, that after the death of Brien-Boru, when faction only gained the monarchy, and that such as were appointed were obeyed but by their own party, still elections went on; but those elected were not acknowledged by our historians as monarchs, or Ard-Righs: they found out a more expressive name; and they were called sometimes *Gafra-Sabhrach*, or monarchs obtruded against the sense of some province. Whatever can give the most comprehensive idea of our history and constitution, I shall not deem a digression. Eochaidh Edgathach, son of Darius,

* Comment. lib. vi.

of the line of Ith, son to the renowned Breogan, succeeded Tig-
 ghermas. He was surnamed Edghadhach, or of the Many-co-
 2865 loured Garments, because he first adopted that regulation made
 by his predecessor. He was slain in the battle of Tara, by Cear-
 mna, of the line of Ir, son of Milesius, after a short reign of
 four years. From the epithet Edgadhach given this prince, Dr.
 Lynch, as well as Mr. O'Flaherty, and from them later writers
 have asserted, that the sumptuary law of colours was first pro-
 mulgated by him. But a short reign, full of confusion and trouble,
 was not the time for establishing and giving permanency to so
 wholesome a regulation; and therefore, by the authority of the
 Leabhar-Lecan, of Dr. Keating, and Bruodinus, I place it in the
 administration of his predecessor.

Cearmna and Sobhairce of the race of Ir, agreed to rule the
 kingdom alternately. The southern half from Inbher Colpa,
 2869 or Drogheda, to Limerick, was possessed by Cearmna; and the
 northern by his brother. Each built a magnificent palace in his
 partition; and these, as Giolla Caomhain notes, were the first
 Irish monarchs of the northern line. Their government was often
 disturbed by attempts from both the Heberean and Heremonian
 lines. At length, after a reign of forty years, they were both
 cut off in battle; Sobhairce fell by the sword of Eochaidh Mean,
 and Cearmna by that of a son of Conmaol, in the battle of Dun-
 Cearmna, now Dun-Patrick, in the county of Cork.

2909 Eochaidh II. son of Conmaol, son of Heber, son of Milesius,
 assumed the reins of government. He was surnamed Faobhar-
 glas, or of the Green Edge; because in his days the art of giving
 different colours to swords and arms was found out, and we are
 told that the points of his javelins and blades of his swords were
 coloured green. In the Psalter of Cashill he is called Faobhar-
 Dhearg, or of the Bloody Edge, to denote the execution he com-

* Comment. lib. vi.

mitted on his enemies. The Picts who had aided the house of Ir, or the northern line, in their late assumed power, he severely punished. He transported a considerable army into Albany, with which he reduced * this people to great distress. At length a peace was made; they engaging themselves by oath, and giving hostages as greater security, no more to interfere in Irish elections. He also defeated the Heremonians in several engagements; but these military employments did not make him forget the arts of peace. Amongst other proofs of this, we find he caused seven considerable woods to be cut down, reclaimed and laid open for tillage. Good fortune at length forsook him; for, after a glorious administration of twenty years, he was slain in the battle of Corman in Leinster.

Fiachadh Labhruine, a descendant of Tighernmas, of the Heremonian line was his successor. He was called Labhruine, from the river of that name, which first appeared in his reign. Loch Erne at the same time burst forth from its bounds, covering a considerable tract of land, the property of the Ernains, of the Belgic tribe, and from whom it took its name. The plain adjoining was the ancient Maigh-Geaneim; and here it was that the Africans, in the days of the Partholanian and Neimhedian colonies, had their principal settlements. He defeated the Heberians in four pitched battles †; nor was he less successful in Albany, where he sent his son with a select body of troops, to quell some disturbances there. He was at length slain in the battle of Bealgadin by his successor, after a reign of twenty-four years.

Eochaidh III. was the son of Mofeibhis, son of Eochaidh, son of Conmaol, of the race of Heber. He was called Mumho, on account of his great power and strength; and the Psalter of

* Keating, p. 1.

† Bruodin de Reg. Hibern. p. 860.

Cashill tells us, that from this surname Munster took its name. He fell in the battle of Cliach, having reigned twenty-two years.

2975

Aongus, surnamed Ol-Bhuadhach, or the All-victorious, son to Fiacha Labhruine of the progeny of Heremon, was the next monarch. The reign of this prince is replete with mighty deeds. He reduced the Damnonii of Conaught to obedience, who began to raise troubles in the state; some attempts of the Heberian line were rendered fruitless through his activity and courage. The Clana Bolg, or Belgæ of Britain, who with the Picts had associated with the enemies of his house, he chastised, having for that purpose transported a powerful army to Britain *. In short, that whole island was reduced, and obliged to pay homage and tribute to the Irish monarch. The English translator of Keating tells us, that with other colonies of Britain, this prince brought into subjection the warlike nation of the Scots, who were before this a free people. I must however, in justice to the memory of that profound antiquarian, and to prevent any mistakes of future writers, assure the public, that no such assertion is to be found in the authentic Irish copies of that work; for the name of Scot was not even mentioned, as there residing for many centuries after. This prince besides his great exploits in war, forgot not to cultivate the arts of peace, having caused ten large woods to be cut down and reclaimed for tillage. But in the eighteenth year of his government, a period was put to his life at the battle of Carman, in Leinster.

2993

Eadhna Airghtheach, son of Eochaidh Mumho, of the line of Heber, was the succeeding prince. The epithet Airghtheach, or of Silver, was bestowed on him as being the first Irish prince that caused shields and targets of pure silver to be fabricated at Airgid-

* Ogygia, p. 206. Keating, &c.

ros; which with chariots and fine horses he bestowed on the most intrepid of his soldiers, as the reward of merit. This mode of honour was not peculiar to the Irish nation; since we read that Solomon * caused 300 targets of beaten gold, and thirty shields of the same metal, to be made for similar purposes.

Certain it is that the Irish military—indeed like all true sons of the blade—placed their greatest glory in the splendour and richness of their arms. This Solinus †, otherwise no admirer of the Irish, fully confesses. That they also fought in chariots highly ornamented cannot be doubted; because our history abounds with accounts of them, and the beauty, spirit, and even names of the very horses employed with them are not forgot. We have seen when different coloured blades were introduced by Eochaidh; and this, and the account of our Carbads, or chariots of war, will fully explain the description which Florus gives us of Bituitus, in the Allobrogian war ‡, “who added splendor to the triumph, “being drawn in his silver chariot with his arms of DIFFERENT “COLOURS, such as he fought with.” According to the Poem of Giolla Caomhain, the Psalter of Cashill, Keating, and Mac Bruodin, this prince reigned twenty-seven years, and then fell in the battle of Raighne.

Rotheachta, son of Moin, son of Aongus, Ol-bhuacadh, of the race of Heremon, assumed the monarchy. Of him nothing farther is related, but that after a reign of twenty-five years, he was slain in the battle of Cruachan by his successor. 3020

Seadhna of the line of Ir, son of Milesius, after a reign of five years, was cut off by his own son, aided by some African pirates. 3045

Fiachda II. the wretched parricide ascended the throne. 3050
He was surnamed Fionsgothach, from Fion, wine, and Sgoth, a

* Chron. chap. ix. ver. 15.

† Cap. xiv.

‡ Lib. iii. cap. ii.

flower,

flower, as wine made of flowers was then much used. I should rather with Bruodinus attribute it to the great plenty of wine then in Ireland; for to me it seems clear that wine was formerly made amongst us. The Venerable Bede * affirms their use amongst us; and should it want farther support, we find Irish words for every thing relative to this precious fruit; as Fion-Amhuin, a vineyard, Fion-Dios, a wine-press, Fion-Chaor, a grape, &c. so that it is with some reason I affirm, that about this time the culture of vines was much improved in Ireland. After an administration of twenty years he was slain in battle by his successor.

3070 The victorious Muinheamhoin, of the line of Heber, is acknowledged as the next monarch. He was so called, says the Book of Munster, from instituting the military order of the Golden Chain, by which knights were for the future to be distinguished, from the rest of the prime nobility. For, says my author, Muince, signifies a collar of gold. He caused also helmets and armour to be made, and ornamented with pure gold. The gold in the front of the helmet was in form of a crescent, and ductile. Many of these I have seen, and had one in my possession, weighing two ounces, for a considerable time. The corselets were also cased with pure ductile gold. A silversmith of the city of Limerick bought one of these from a farmer near Tulla, in the county of Clare, a few years ago; it weighed nine ounces, and many more were supposed to be found at the same time.

Coats of mail studded and ornamented with gold, we find in very early use, and even amongst nations not highly civilized—thus Virgil—

Loricam confertam hamis, Auroque trilicem;
and again—

Nec duplici squama Lorica fidelis & auro.

* Histor. Eccl. Brit. lib. i. cap. i.

And

And the great antiquity of chains of gold round the neck, and of rings on the finger, will appear, by Pharaoh ordering both to be presented to Joseph *, on interpreting his dream. We find also in the army of Moses, that the chief commanders wore chains of gold round the neck †.

The very great plenty of gold in Ireland in these early days, and in times much nearer our own, will not be disputed but by such as shut their ears to the voice of truth. They acquired it from native mines, and they extracted both it and silver, from their mines of copper and lead. They accumulated quantities of gold by their traffic with Spain, and with Africa; hence their shields of pure silver; hence their helmets and corselets cased with gold; hence the numbers of swords of mixt metal with gold handles, to this day found in bogs and morasses; hence the hostages detained at the courts of our monarchs, having their shackles of pure gold; hence the very harnesses for horses were ornamented with gold! Lord Strafford ‡ presented to Charles I. the bit of a bridle found in Ireland of solid gold, weighing ten ounces; nay, long after the Norman invasion, we find an act of the little Parliament of the Pale, prohibiting the use of gold in horse furniture, but to persons of a certain rank! But should farther doubts remain as to this matter, I have but to refer my reader to more ample proofs §.

Aldergoid succeeded his father in the monarchy. As Muineamhoin distinguished the knights from the other nobility, by chains of gold round the neck, so this prince directed that the Ollamhs, or doctors in different sciences, should constantly wear a gold ring; hence, says the Psalter of Cashill, he was called Aildergoid, from Failge, or Fain, a ring, Oir, gold, and Doid,

* Genesis, chap. xli. ver. 42.

† Numb. chap. xxxi. ver. 50.

‡ Warner's Introduction to Irish History, p. 49.

§ Introduction to Irish History, from page 206 to 215.

the hand. This continued ever after a custom in Ireland, and when Charlemagne founded the universities of Pavia and Paris, in the eighth century, Claude Clement, and John Scot, both Irishmen, were appointed regents, and then for the first time introduced on the continent the Birede, Biretrum, or doctor's cap, and the gold ring, as the insignia of doctors, and by which they preceded all ranks but the nobility. After a reign of twelve years, he fell in battle by the arm of his successor. He is called by Giolla Caomhain, Aldergoid a Ndoid, or Aldergoid of the Hand, from this institution.

C H A P. VII.

Mistakes with respect to Irish history corrected—their mode of succession no proof of barbarity—possessed arts and sciences in an eminent degree in those early days—their frequent feuds no proof to the contrary.

BEFORE we proceed farther in our history, it becomes necessary to advert to, and refute some specious objections made to our early annals. The few foreigners who have touched on our history, but particularly British writers represent it as that of a barbarous nation, in the perusal of which, nothing new or interesting is to be met with, but shocking recitals of princes murdering each other, and by this means succeeding to the throne. From prejudiced people, and a people ignorant of the language and antiquities of the country, such suggestions may pass; but when I behold a gentleman of Mr. O'Connor's abilities, joining in the cry, I cannot, I own, suppress my feelings.

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In his dissertation prefixed to *Ogygia Vindicated*, being a posthumous work of the learned O'Flaherty, and in his notes on this work, he represents the ancient state of Ireland very different from what it was. He says, that being originally peopled by Celtic and Scytho-Celtic colonies, from North and South Britain, they retained the same barbarous customs; and as in this assertion he contradicts *all* the antiquities of his country, he chuses rather to accuse their authors of imposition and ignorance, than himself of willful error. Though in one place he confesses, that the Phœnicians, who instructed our ancestors in the art of navigation, must have also communicated letters to them; yet in another he affirms, that it was not till the fifth age of Christianity that letters were introduced amongst them, by the Roman missionaries, when they laid aside their Beth-Luis-Nion, and their Ogham! It happens however unluckily for the assumption, that this very Beth-Luis-Nion, which he tells us they then laid aside, was the letter they then used, and the letter we use at this day! Will any man advance, that in the fifth century, the Latin alphabet consisted of no more than seventeen letters? But what makes it the more extraordinary, is, that we have reason to believe, that, except in what might regard church discipline, the Roman alphabet was seldom used. In my copy of the Psalter of Cashill, in a copy of Hippocrates, and in many early records on vellum, I find the Latin wrote in Irish characters. True it is, that in the days of St. Patrick they altered the arrangement of their letters; instead of the consonants, as in the scheme I have already given, they commenced with the letter Ailim, or A; but sure it cannot be inferred from this alteration that they took a new alphabet!

Nor can he be justified, when he tells us—"that our more
" ancient monarchs were chiefly employed in distressing and kill-
" ing each other—and, that they seemed to have lost in Ireland those
" arts they brought from the continent." Other private opini-

ons obtruded in the teeth of ancient history, I shall pass by, as they must fall of themselves. But it becomes my indispensable duty as an historian, to animadvert on whatever seems to carry a specious appearance of reason and probability.

Constitutional pride, joined to innate bravery, seem to have been EVER the characteristics of the Irish nation. This pride constantly fed by the poems of the bards, and by the reflection of their high antiquity and noble blood, made them at all times—even to our own days—ready to sacrifice every other consideration to it. The unhappy differences that first broke out in Ireland, in the very infancy of the Milesian government, were constantly kept alive from the same cause. The line of Heber, as being the elder branch, imagined they had an exclusive right to the monarchy. The other branches contended, that in a government where superior abilities were ever preferred to lineal succession, their claims were unexceptionable: as it is often the case in private quarrels, between people equally brave and proud, neither will recede, so with these, it would be deemed infamy in any successor to recede in the least from the pretensions of his house, or to omit any opportunity of enforcing them. Yet even in these civil commotions (generally the most sanguinary) there was observed a conduct peculiarly striking, which seemed to elevate their characters beyond their neighbouring nations.

To outlive a general defeat; to exist after the loss of the diadem, was to entail an eternal disgrace on the family. It was acknowledged by the princes; it was constantly practised by them; and in this they were imitated by the knights, and the great nobility. *Is buane blath, na Saoighal*—"Glory is preferable to the world," was a constant maxim amongst our heroes. It was the answer of Cucullain, when requested by his officers to avoid engaging in the fatal battle of Muirtheimhne, till the arrival of Connal

Connal Cearnach *. And he further observed, that his vows as a knight obliged him to decline no engagement. When Eugene the Great, in the second century fell in the bloody battle of Magh-Lena, his body pierced by a thousand wounds, was raised on the shields of his enemies, and brought to Gaull, the monarch's general, "Lay down the body of the king of Munster (says he), for he died as an hero should †!" In a word, not to multiply instances, but *a single example* occurs in the whole Irish history of a prince's surviving the loss of his diadem, and this was Malachy II. in the commencement of the eleventh century! Thus the death of the unsuccessful competitor, instead of being a stain on our annals, only higher blazons the national character of our princes! Add to this, that ancient history, in general, shews, that few princes died peaceable deaths, which gave occasion to the remarks of Juvenal, Sat. x.

Ad generum Cereris, sine cæde & vulnere pauci
Descendunt reges, & siccâ morte Tyranni.

Nor should the remarkable saying of Vespasian be forgot on this occasion—"Stantem (says he) imperatorem mori oportet!" But if the violent deaths of these different princes, instead of being a stain on our annals, demonstrate only their romantic bravery and exalted notions; the behaviour of the victors is the highest proof of *Milesian beneficence*, the eternal concomitant of real bravery. On the death of the defeated prince—for he reserved his life till he saw all lost, and then rushed into the midst of the enemy—the marshal who attended, to shew where he was, struck his standard, which was the signal for retreat, when all carnage

* Catha Maigh-Muirtheimhne.

† Ionfidhe Magh-Lena.

immediately ceased, and the defeated party returned home. No estates were confiscated; nothing was forfeited; no advantages taken of the widow and the orphan! The children or dependents of the deceased prince were not seized, or their territories or estates usurped. The glory of monarchy alone stimulated their ambition!

From this account we plainly see, that the violent deaths of our different princes in battle should not, or ought not to be attributed to cruelty or barbarity; and upon retrospection it will appear, (contrary to what Mr. O'Connor asserts) that they were employed in something more rational, than "*distressing and killing each other.*" The very alliance formed between our first prince Heremon and the Picts, is as clear a proof of wisdom and policy as the annals of history can produce. Nay, in the administration of the Damnonii, we find objects highly worthy attention. If the northern nations of Europe boast the early use of arts and letters, does not the history of our people justify and explain this? From this history also can we trace the origin of solemnly inaugurating our princes; the use of the sword and javelin, and of the horse in war! In the preceding account of our Milesian princes, every proof is exhibited of a wise and polished people. The nation classed, by which every rank in life was ascertained, and that by a simple sumptuary law, must proclaim an administration of wisdom! Mines explored and worked to perfection; gold and silver blazoning on the arms of the military; cloaths manufactured; beautiful colours invented, and the celebrated dye of the Tyrians improved, surely demonstrates a flourishing commercial people! Lettered men, preceding the first nobility—for as in China at this day, they seem to have been also the ministers of state—and even the form of passing doctors, as now every where practised, being at so remote a period established

blished amongst us, will incontestibly proclaim a learned people ! To conclude, is it possible to shew stronger proofs of unbounded humanity, than the establishing houses of hospitality for the relief of the stranger and the distressed ; assigning to their support large tracts of land in every part of the kingdom, and ranking the Beatachs, or keepers of such houses, next to the prime nobility ! All which plainly shews—" that they did not lose in Ireland " those arts they brought from the continent !" In countries where the fine arts are protected, war will not injure, much less destroy them. The reign of Francis I. was one continued scene of war, yet he first introduced letters into France. The reign of Louis XIV. was long and bloody, and still learning was never more flourishing there. Britain and Germany equally involved in war, yet still protected letters ; whilst Ireland in peace for near a century, for want of countenancing, science has in a manner fairly left them !

B O O K IV.

C H A P. I.

The reign of Ollamh-Fodhla—reforms the constitution, and establishes the famous Feis-Tamhrach—their manner of assembling, and the objects of their deliberations—other assemblies of an inferior nature — of Fion, Slanoll, Geide, Fiach III. Bearngal, and Olioll, succeeding monarchs.

3082

EOCHAIÐH, the son of Fiachadh, son of Seadhna, of the line of Ir, after the battle of Tara, was solemnly inaugurated, on the Liagh-Fail, monarch of Ireland. The reign of this prince and the great reforms he made in the constitution, form a memorable epocha in Irish history. In the preceding reigns, the reader must have perceived the gradual advances to politeness and sound legislation. The completion of this grand system was reserved for the present time. Eochaidh was a prince of great erudition, and on this account he got the name of Ollamh-Fodhla, or the Learned Doctor, or Legislator; and as he is better known by this, than his real name, by it we shall for the future call him. As Mumhain, or Munster took its name from Eochaidh-Mumho, so did Ulladh, or Ulster, by inflection, from Fodhla: hence it would seem that Munster was so called from its superior power (Mumho importing power and strength), and Ulster from its learning.

Fraught

Fraught big with the mighty projects of destroying national feuds, and transmitting the monarchy to his own immediate successors, in exclusion of the other branches of the royal line, he began this great reform by establishing a triennial parliament at Tara, to form general laws for the whole kingdom; and during which meeting the provincial kings and feudatory lords were considered as counsellors to the monarch only. To avoid the least confusion or cause of complaint, the arrangement of the people was such as announced the highest degree of politeness. Miodh-Cuarta, where the chief assembly met *, was 300 feet long, thirty cubits high, fifty in width, and had fourteen doors. The monarch's throne was elevated in the center of this room, with his face to the west. The king of Leinster had his at a proper distance, but lower, and fronting the monarch; the Munster king was on his left hand; the king of Ulster on his right; and the king of Conaught behind him. The reason why this last place was assigned the Conacian prince, was his being of the Belgic race. Long seats were placed for the other orders in the state. In the first row were placed the Ollamhs, or doctors in sciences, and which rank the Christian bishops afterwards held. The hereditary marshal, standard-bearer, and treasurer, had places allotted to them; next came the chief of the nobility, at the head of whom were placed the knights; after these the Beatachs, and representatives of towns and cities. Deputies from the Picts and Brigantes of Britain had also seats allotted them in this assembly.

This most august convention met three days before the great feast of Samhuin (i. e. before the first of November). The two first days were spent in visits and friendly intercourse; the third in celebrating the feast of Samhuin, or the moon, in the temple

* Dinisheanchas-Ward, p. 359. Keating, p. 1, &c.

of Tlachta; just as their Phœnician ancestors met in the house of Rimmon *, i. e. of the moon, from Re, the moon, and Muadh, an image; hence Reamhan, prophesying by the moon! The assembly was announced by sacred odes, set to a grand variety of musical instruments. In the days of St. Patrick this meeting in the presence of Loagaire the monarch, was compared for grandeur and magnificence to that of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, on the plains of Dura †. The Druids having finished their rites and mysteries, the great fire of Samhuin was lighted up, and the deities solemnly invoked to bless the national counsels. The three succeeding days were spent in entertainments and festivities; after which the national business, in all its departments, commenced. We read with astonishment of the wonderful order and regularity observed in these great festivals. First, notice was given by sound of trumpet, when the esquires of the nobility, and of the other orders of the state, presented themselves at the door of the grand hall, and gave in the shields and ensigns of their different masters, to the deputies of the great-marshal of the crown; and, by direction of the king at arms, they were ranged according to the qualities of the different owners. A second blast of trumpet, at a proper distance of time, gave notice to the target-bearers of the general officers, to deliver up these insignia also; and on the third sound, the princes, the nobility, &c. appeared, and were immediately seated under their different arms, without the least disorder or confusion.

The proper business of this first assembly was the police of the kingdom; foreign alliances; peace and war, and a most strict examination of the national records. Was any nobleman, or other treated unjustly by his prince, here was his sovereign

* 2 Kings, chap. v. ver. 18.

† Trias Thaum. Vita St. Rumold. Prim. Ecl. Brit. &c.

appeal.

appeal. Did any prince act contrary to the laws ; unjustly oppress a weaker power, to this great assembly they appealed for justice, and had it ! Princes who seemed refractory were soon brought to order, as, in such cases, not only the monarch, but every order of the state were to send proportionable forces to reduce the delinquent to reason. Here the records of the nation underwent a severe scrutiny, and the transactions of the different provincial kings were carefully compared with each other. The most severe punishments awaited on such Senachies as could be convicted of the least falsehood ; but in every other respect, their persons and properties were inviolable. In the most violent civil dissensions, their houses were asylums, and their lands and flocks free from depredation ; and it is most unexampled, that in every revolution the nation experienced, even to the beginning of the last century, a single instance does not occur, of a Senachie's being convicted of misrepresentation, or this law being violated. Nay even at periods when the number of bards became a real burthen to kingdom, and that their insolence drew on them national resentment, they were punished by banishment, and by a reduction of their number *only*. In the present assembly it was decreed, that for the future, the number of Ollamhs, or doctors in different sciences, should not exceed 200 of each order. All the different records of the kingdom were *here* examined ; and this was the first rise of the famous Psalter of Tara, being an epitome of unerring facts, drawn from the other records of the kingdom, and which it was looked upon as criminal to form the least doubt ! Here it was that this great prince delivered in the origin, the exploits, and migrations of the Milesian race, till their landing in Ireland, all wrote with his own hand, and entered into the *Senachas More*, the Great Antiquity, or Psalter of Tara, so called from this place of their meeting. In order to have the national history carried on, in the most clear and unexceptionable

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manner,

manner, it was agreed that for the future, each province should have its history apart, and that nothing should be deemed authentic but what was contained in said annals, which were to be laid before this parliament every third year; hence the Psalter of Cashill, or Book of Munster; the Psalters of Ardmach, and Tuam; the Books of Leath-Cuin; and from these, the Books, Dromsneachta, Gleandaloch, of Conquests, of Giolla-Caomhain, &c. &c. &c. And could we suppose our national records to want farther proofs of authenticity, the consideration that the kingdom was for the most part unhappily divided into parties, and yet all agreeing as to facts, without a single dissent, should be deemed irrefragable.

Assemblies of an inferior nature met also at Tara. A court of justice was established, where appeals from the provinces were heard and determined; and this was called *Realta na Fhileadh*. Even merchants and artisans formed laws for the expanding of commerce, and the improvement of manufactures! But as nothing contributes more to soften the manners of a proud and warlike people, than an easy converse with the fair, this great object was not overlooked by our present great reformer. The ladies made a conspicuous figure at these meetings. The provincial queens and their attendants held public assemblies, and the place of their meeting was called *Grianan na Ninghean*, or the Palace of the Ladies. The smallest insult offered to any one, especially the women, during the whole session, was punishable by death, out of the power of the monarch to pardon. Besides all these reforms, this great legislator founded an university at Tara, which for rank and dignity preceded all others of the kingdom, and which he called *Mur-Ollamhan*, or the College of Doctors; as such as took this last degree *here*, preceded all others of the same rank, in other parts of the kingdom. Something like this St. Patrick practised when he fixed upon Ardmach, as the primacy of
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of Ireland, by founding at the same time an university there, the doctors of which took rank of all others. Thus did this great prince by a code of laws, founded on the strictest principles of justice, lay the foundation of a mighty monarchy, and of a general reformation, by destroying all party-distinctions. Greece, Italy, in short no other polite nation of antiquity can boast so perfect a legislator; and though party and faction, as we shall see, from time to time, suspended the force of these laws, yet the nation never lost sight of them. At every future period in which the people were blessed with a monarch of abilities, his first object was, the revival of these great triennial meetings, or Feis-Tamh-rach. This renowned legislator long enjoyed the fruits of his labour and sound policy; and after a peaceable and glorious reign of forty years died, leaving the succession to his eldest son.

Fion was inaugurated with great solemnity. He is called by 3122 all our writers Fionnachta; but the adjunct Nachta, or Sneachta, was added to his real name, and which signifies snow, as an unusual quantity fell every winter during his administration. We find nothing particular recorded of him, except his liberality, noticed in the Book of Reigns; but we must suppose on account of the length of his governing, and the peaceableness of his exit, that he steadily pursued the maxims of his father. He was taken off by a fever in his palace of Tara, after a reign of twenty years.

His brother was his successor. He is distinguished by the 3142 the epithet Slanoll, or All-healthy, on account of the very few who died in his administration. He died in the house of Moidh-Cuarta, after a reign of seventeen years. We are told, that forty years after his decease, his body was dug up by his son Olioll, and found pure and uncorrupted.

Geide, surnamed Oll-Golhach, or of the Strong Voice, and 3159 youngest son of Ollamh-Fodhla, was the next monarch. But his nephew

nephew could not patiently bear this double exclusion of what he thought his right, and therefore raised great disturbances in the state. Being more active and vigorous than the monarch, he ceased not his attempts till he at length slew him in battle and thus attained the summit of his wishes and ambition.

3176 Fiachadh III. the son of Fionnachta, son of Ollamh-Fodhla, of the line of Ir, succeeded his uncle, and reigned twenty years, according to the Book of Reigns. His government was frequently disturbed, by the son of his predecessor. Many bloody battles were fought, and feats of great prowess performed ; but at length he fell in battle a sacrifice to the manes of his uncle.

3196 Bearngall, the son of Geide, reigned twelve years. He made fierce war on the posterity of Ith, whose chiefs he banished the kingdom ; but at length the sword made way for his successor.

3208 Olioll the son of Slanoll, son of Ollamh-Fodlah reigned ten years, and was slain by Siorna, of the line of Heremon ; and thus by unhappy family feuds, were the effects of all the wise institutions of the great Ollamh-Fodhla, if not defeated, at least suspended for a time, and the monarchy wrested from his family. What a lesson of instruction, and a fund of reflection !

C H A P. II.

The reign of Siorna—of Rotheachta, and the rise of military chariots—Elim—Giallacha—art and the origin of fortifications in Ireland—Nuadha—Breasfrigh—Eochaidh IV.—great intercourse between the Irish and Carthaginians—Fion II.—Seadhna—Simon—Duach—Muredheach.

THE convulsions raised in the state in the infancy of the Milesian government, and unhappily fed and cherished by a perpetual flow of malignant humours for more than three centuries, we have seen, through the astonishing abilities of one prince, if not totally subdued, at least completely mastered for a time; and instead of a kind of elective, an hereditary monarchy established, the most likely to give vigour and permanence to every state. We now with regret turn to fresh scenes of tumult and slaughter, the fatal effects of ambition. But the history of nations is the history of morality. It is the *clare obscure* of human nature; and the duty of an historian, is, to paint men and nations, not as they should be, but as they really are. But notwithstanding the scenes of contention we shall be obliged to exhibit, we can still trace improvements in arts civil and military. Indeed, in countries where an exact subordination is established, they can never experience these dreadful calamities, generally concomitant on frequent changes of government in less polished states. It is the partizans of both sides only that feel these effects. The literati, the merchant, the artisan, and agrarian uninterruptedly pursue their different avocations; and these are the most useful people in every state.

Siorna,

3223 Siorna, called Saoghalach, or the Long-lived, (being said to have reached to his 150th year) the son of Dein, grandson of Rotheachtingh, says, the Leabhar-Lecan, of the house of Here-mon, was solemnly crowned, on the Liagh-Fail, monarch of Ireland. The better to insure to himself the crown, he marched an army into Ulster, and attacked and defeated the Irians at Aras Keilter, now the city of Down. Some branches of the Belgæ, leagu- ing with that people, he also chastised. Loagaire the son of Ludhadh, of the race of Heber, who had called in to his assistance the Fomharaigh Africans, or rather Carthaginians, he also de- feated and killed the African chief, named Ciafral, the son of Dorela. After a glorious and triumphant rule of twenty-one years, he fell in the battle of Aillin *. Of this prince Siorna, the Leabhar-Lecan tells us, that he drew up his army to greater advantage than any preceding prince; and that by this means, in the battle of Montrogadh, he defeated the troops of Lugar the African, which consisted of Coige-Catha, i. e. 15000 men.

3244 Rotheachta II. conqueror of the race of Heber, was proclaimed monarch. In his days the use of † Carbuds, or chariots, was first introduced into Ireland. These chariots were of two sorts: the first used by princes, by the nobility, and by the ladies, highly ornamented, and for conveyance only; the other, called Carbud- Scarradh, was employed in war. To the sides and wheels of this last, scythes and hooks were fixt, such as we read most great na- tions of antiquity used, and such as Cæsar tells us were employed in Britain in his days. After a reign of seven years this prince was killed by lightning, at Don-Sobhaire. It is worthy notice that in the year of Rome 456, the Gauls for the first time used these armed chariots against the Romans.

* Ogygia, p. 247.

† Leabhar-Mumhain.

His son Elim succeeded him ; but his reign was short and turbulent, being cut off, in the first year of his administration, by his successor. 3251

Giallacha, of the house of Heremon, held the sceptre for nine years ; when the sword made way for his competitor. 3252

Art, the son of Elim, of the Heberian line, was the next monarch. 3261 In his days, we read, for the first time, of fortifications being constructed in Ireland. Around the different stations in which he garrisoned his troops, he cut deep trenches, and raised high breast-works of earth, lined with stone. Into these trenches he conveyed water, by subterraneous passages, to a considerable depth ; and the entrances were by a kind of wooden bridges, which, being taken up at night secured them from sudden attacks. He completed seven of these stations ; but in after-periods, particularly in the Danish wars, these Duns, or fortifications, were amazingly increased, insomuch that several parts of the kingdom are yet incumbered with them. Moderns have attributed these to the Danes, but we see how unjustly. The Psalter of Cashill tells us, that in memory of this invention, he got the epithet Imlioch, or surrounded by Stagnant Water, as the word imports. He was a very warlike prince, and defeated the Heremonians in several battles, but at length fell in that of Rathlin, having reigned twelve years.

Nuadha Fionn-Fail, of the house of Heremon, succeeded. In the fourteenth year of his administration, he was slain in battle by the hand of his successor. 3273

Breafriagh, the son of Art, son of Elim, of the line of Heber, was the next monarch. 3287 The Psalter of Cashill tells us, he governed the kingdom with great glory and prudence, and defeated the Africans (who we see were employed to assist the pretensions of his house, about fifty years earlier), in many bloody battles. But the career of his glory was closed by the sword of

3296 Eochaidh IV. the son of Fin, of the line of Ith, uncle to Milesius, who was proclaimed monarch. His reign was short, and marked by a most fatal plague, which carried off numbers of people, from which he got the surname of Apthach, or of the Plague. But the rapidity of this disorder could not damp the fire of ambition; and we read indeed—indeed with astonishment—of his falling in battle in the first year of his reign!

From the very beginning of our history, we find the Fomharaigh, or (as it literally signifies) pirates, frequently mentioned; and nothing is clearer than that these people were always considered as Africans. This is expressed as full as words can make it, by all our antiquities, as the Book of Conquests, of Munster, &c. And this I think the more proper to remark, as some moderns mention them as Scandinavians; whereas the real time of the invasion of these last people is as exactly noted by our writers, as that of the Africans. By these Africans, it is manifest no other people could be meant, but the Carthaginians, as no other nation of Africa was then known as a commercial or maritime state. And this I find pointed out in a most evident manner, in a very ancient poem, sometimes quoted by Dr. Keating, beginning with “Fuaruis a Saltar Chaifil;” where he more than twice mentions these Africans by the name of Fine-Fomharaice—i. e. the Phœnician Africans; words which clearly point out their descent, as different from their country; not as indigenous, but as a transplanted people. Diodorus tells us, that after building Gades, near the Pillars of Hercules, the Phœnicians extended their discoveries along the African coasts; but one of their ships being driven far into the ocean, by a storm that lasted many days, they at length landed in an island in the Atlantic ocean, unparalleled for its fertility and temperature. Aristotle says, it was discovered by the Carthaginians; that is was a most fertile land, and many days sail from the continent. Strabo tells us, that this Atlantic

lantic isle was *partly* possessed by the Carthaginians; and Herodotus affirms, that they drew such quantities of gold, and other commodities from it, as to cause them to declare it death to discover to strangers its situation, or this gainful commerce. What lights does not our history reverberate on all these passages!

We have already noticed the great improvements of our ancestors in arts, manufactures, and commerce; and in Africa and in Spain, we now behold the great vent for their commodities. We shall find many other instances, besides the last, of the plague's breaking out in Ireland; a disorder at all times unknown in Europe, except when communicated from Africa or the Levant. The history of Carthage particularly notes the times at which this disorder raged with greatest violence amongst them; and as none others but they carried on traffic from Africa, it is, I think, evident, that from thence we must have received it. Add to this, that the Gadelian colony when coming from Africa, through the Streights to Galicia, left a part of their people in Getulia, who, history informs us, when Dido landed there, spoke to her in the Phœnician tongue, and of course must have informed this commercial people of this great migration. Masters of the sea, and of part of Spain, Ireland could not be unknown to them; and the reciprocation of advantages arising from commerce to both people, we must suppose soon confederated them. Hence every new improvement in arts, civil or military, on the continent, found its way to Ireland; hence the beautiful colours, particularly the purple, green, and blue, introduced by Tighernmas; hence the discovery of mines, and the elegant fabric for arms of all sorts; hence the amazing plenty of gold and silver. The product of these manufactures are clearly accounted for!

But that no possible doubt should remain of this close intercourse between the Irish and Carthaginians, it appears, that Carthaginian swords found near the plains of Cannæ, and now in the

British Museum, and the old Irish swords, so frequently found in bogs and morasses, are, as to make, form, and mixture of metals, so exactly similar as to appear to have come out of the same mint! Governor Pownal * compared some Irish swords in the possession of Lord Milton, and found in the bog of Cullen, in the county of Tipperary, with those in the British Museum, and was surprised at their similarity. He requested the assay master of the Mint to analyse both. He did so; and found the proportion of mixture of metals so exactly corresponding, that he declared they must have been cast in the same furnace. “They are both (says he) a mixture of copper, of iron, and perhaps of some zinc. They take an exquisite fine polish, and carry a very sharp edge, and are firm and elastic. They are so peculiarly formed, as to resist any kind of rust, as appears when taken out of bogs, after lying in them for ages!” Upon the whole, the learned Governor takes it for granted, that our Irish swords were from Carthage, and brought here in the course of traffic; but as our annals particularly remark the plenty of our mines, and the very flourishing state of our fabrics for arms, the candid reader will, I believe, agree with me, that from us they were supplied with these, as well as many other useful articles in commerce. I have dwelt the more particularly on this fact, as this correspondence will greatly contribute to elucidate many passages in the Irish history, as well as in that of Carthage, and shew the close connection between both states. The most ancient offensive weapons, next to sticks and stones, were undoubtedly of brass—thus Lucretius, lib. v.

Arma antiqua manus, ungues, dentesque fuere;

Et lapides, & item silvarum fragmina, rami.

Posterius ferri vis est, ærisque reperta:

Sed *prior* æris erat quam ferri, cognitus usus.

* An account of some Irish antiquities, read before the English Antiquary Society, Feb. 10th, 1774.

Fion II. son of Bratha, a descendant of the great Ollamh-Fodhla, of the race of Ir, by right of conquest, swayed the Irish sceptre twenty-one years. Of this prince I find nothing particular mentioned; but that he fell as usual by the sword of his successor. 3297

Seadhna II. son of Breafrigh, son of Art, of the line of Heber, ascended the Irish throne. To the native intrepidity of the Milesian race, he added prudence and policy. He wrote a code of laws and discipline for the military, which was a standard for many succeeding ages. To prevent oppression, he also regulated their pay, from the colonel to the common soldier; and to prevent the occasion of dissipation, so destructive of military discipline, this pay was, part in money, in cloaths, and in food, as practised at this day. From this regulation he was called Ion-naruidh, or of the Military Stipend. This great prince died in a manner unheard of before in Ireland; for his limbs were torn asunder by command of his successor. Though this is the earliest account extant of a treatise on tactics, yet we find it well considered by succeeding writers, as Mago amongst the Carthaginians; Arrian, &c. amongst the Greeks. 3318

The cruel Simon Breac, or the Speckled, of the house of Heremon; after a turbulent and factious rule of six years, was taken prisoner by Duach the son of Seadhna, and put to the same cruel death he inflicted on his father. 3338

This Duach, called Fionn, or the White, held the reins of government ten years, and then resigned both life and crown to the superior power of 3344

Muiredheach Balgrach, the son of Simon. He reigned but one year, and was slain by Eadhna, who became his successor. 3354

C H A P. III.

The reign of Eadhna, and the rise of mints in Ireland—Lugha, Sior-Laimh, Eochaidh V. and the difference between the Currachs, and ships of the Irish—Eochaidh invades Greece—Eochaidh VI. Lugha II. Conuing, Art II. Fiachadh IV. Airgeadmhar, Duach II. Lugha III.

3355 **E**ADHNA II. called Dearg, or the Red, the son of Duach, of the race of Heber, assumed the reins of government. In this reign we read, for the first time, that a mint was erected and money coined at Airgiod-Ros, on the banks of the Suir; where at our earlier periods shields and targets of pure silver were fabricated. Before this, gold and silver were disposed of as mere bullion. The learned foreigner will, no doubt, reasonably demand, why are not some of these coins preserved, so necessary to the illustration of our history, as we know numbers belonging to other polished nations have been? To this I shall, for answer, observe, that in the year 1639, a large quantity of Irish coins were discovered by some countrymen at Gleandaloch, in the county of Wicklow, a parcel of which fell into the hands of Sir James Ware. Mr. Harris * confesses them to be of great antiquity, and both Ware, Harris, and Simon †, have given us figures of some of them; and they all agree as to the very early use of money in Ireland! We find before the Incarnation, that the Bons, or pieces of four-pence value; the Scrubal, or three-

* Antiquities of Ireland, p. 206.

† Simon on Irish coins.

penny pieces, and the Pinghin, or penny, were common through the kingdom ; but larger pieces of money, though carrying the impress of the monarch or provincial king, were here then, as at this day in China, estimated by weight only. In a commercial country where mines of all kinds were worked ; where in times of Catholicity, the church plate through the kingdom was mostly of gold ; where such quantities of it has been from time to time, and still is found in bogs and morasses ; to doubt of their wanting so essential an article as money, though our writers had been even silent on the subject, would be absurd. It is but too melancholy a truth, that from the first introduction of the Normans into Ireland, they established a savage policy, which seems, EVEN AT THIS DAY, to operate on too many. They represented the aborigines as barbarians in the eyes of Europe ; and their emissaries *here*, were but too successful in their endeavours to destroy and efface, every evidence to the contrary ! To preserve medals, coins, or whatever could contradict this, was not the way to make court to the great, but to destroy them—nay to impose them on the public, as the coins of even the barbarous Dane—was admissible ! I have heard, and been assured, that quantities of gold coins have been frequently found, even within these last twenty years past, in bogs and waste grounds ; that they have been conveyed to Dublin and elsewhere, sold privately, and immediately melted down, by which means many poor families have suddenly become opulent.

We have in the last chapter, I think, fully proved, that these Africans, so frequently mentioned in our history, were none others but the Carthaginians ; and a little retrospection will plainly shew, that the customs and police adopted in the one state, was soon introduced into the other. The Tyrian dye, and the manufactures of arms, so early established here, with the use of armed chariots for war, seem to proclaim this. Byrsa, the citadel of Carthage,
so

so called, as we have already noted, from its being surrounded by water, explains from whom Art Imlioch borrowed this kind of fortification. The Carthaginians, beyond a doubt, brought this science to great perfection; since we find, by their first alliance with the Romans, about A. M. 3452, they were particularly interdicted building forts in the country of Latium. If the Irish, some centuries before the Romans, introduced a regular discipline, and a constant pay amongst their military, so did the Carthaginians; and it is singular enough to find by Justin *, that much about this time both should be introduced by Mago into Carthage! In fine, the Irish coins given by Ware, and copied by Harris and Simon, have on the face an human head, encircled with a cap or helmet, and on the reverse of some an horse; and we find some ancient Carthaginian coins in the same style! The present prince Eadhna, on whose account we have thus digressed, died of the plague, after a reign of twelve years, as did great numbers of the people.

3367 Lughaidh, surnamed Jardhon, or of the Colour of Iron, on account of the odd colour his hair, peaceably succeeded his deceased father. Invading Ulster with a considerable army, after a bloody contest, he was slain by his successor at Rath-Clochar.

3376 The victorious Sior-Laimh, the son of Fin, of the house of Ir, was proclaimed monarch. This name was metaphorically given him, to denote the great extent of his power and command, Sior-Laimh, signifying Lon-handed. He was a great enemy to the house of Heber, and sorely oppressed them; but in the sixteenth year of his reign he fell in battle, and so gave way to his successor.

3392 Eochaidh, called Uarcheas, the son of Lughaidh, of the race of Heber, seized on the crown. The reason of the epithet Uarcheas

* Lib. xix. cap. i.

was this. So great was the power of Sior-Laimh, and so much did he dread the known abilities of the present prince, that he could not think himself in security till he was totally reduced. Unable any longer to oppose the monarch in the field, he took the resolution of trusting to his fleet. He collected a fleet of thirty large ships, which he manned with the bravest and most faithful of his followers, with which he put to sea. In order to enable him to make sudden landings in the most tempestuous weather, we are told, that he had a great number of cribs made of wattles, and covered with hides, in which his men frequently annoyed the coasts of his enemy. For Ceas, is Irish for a crib, or large basket of wattles, and Fuare, denotes cold, as being used in bad weather only; and indeed it is astonishing in what rough weather people will, at this day, run out to sea in such craft. But to prove that the sole use of these craft, in insular or continental invasions, was to land men in rough weather, we find Cæsar * to have successfully used them to cross a river in Spain, on a similar occasion. From us we may presume the Britons, and most of the neighbouring states, took the method of using such vessels. But writers have strangely erred, in affirming, as many have, that our invasions of Britain were in these sort of Currachs, or boats. Thus Gildas †: “The rude droves of Scots and Picts throng
“hastily out of their Currachs, in which they were conveyed
“across the Scythian channel.” And Solinus affirms ‡, “that
“the sea between Britain and Ireland is rough and tempestuous;
“yet they pass it in wicker boats, encompassed with a swelling
“covering of ox hides.”

It is evident from what has been said, that Ireland was very early an extensive commercial country. Should we want foreign evidence, Tacitus § is clear and full in this matter. Could com-

* De Bello Civili, lib. i. cap. 48.

† Cap. 35.

‡ De Excid. Britan.

§ Vita Jul. Agricol.

merce be carried on in such barks as the above? surely not. Were they fit to transport armies, ammunition, &c. across the sea? they undoubtedly were not. Our historians declare *—and the Psalter of Cashill is explicit in it—that their use was solely to land troops, in rough tempestuous weather, or reimbark them when necessary. The poet Claudian, in celebrating the glory of his patron Stilico, is very clear, that our invasions of Britain were from large ships—

Me quoque vicinis pereuntem gentibus, inquit,
Munivit Stilico. Totam cum Scotus Iernem
Movit, & infesto spumavit remige Thetys.

In fine, the Venerable Bede † tells us, that the Scots and Picts crossed that arm of the sea only, which divided England from Scotland, in their boats; nor can we be surprised that the Irish carried them in their ships for this purpose, when Cæsar tells us, in the above recited place, that he had them conveyed twenty-two miles over land, to answer a similar purpose.

It is very singular, that the Psalter of Cashill should tell us, that with this fleet Eochaidh invaded Greece, and was successful in all his attacks. To explain this, we must, I think, agree—and it will hereafter appear more evident—that the Irish confederated with the Carthaginians, and frequently assisted them in their wars; nor need we here insist much on what is confessed, and at the same time censured by ancient writers, as Polybius, Diodorus, Livy, &c. namely, that the Carthaginian armies were mostly composed of mercenaries of different nations, and speaking different languages. We have seen Ludhadh, of the line of Heber, call in these Africans to his assistance; and in many other instances we find them employed amongst us. Why not sup-

* Ogygia, p. 250, &c.

† Hist. Eccl. Brit. lib. i. cap. 12.

pose the present prince to apply to them for succour? In the second century of Christ, we read, that Eugene the Great, of *this same house*, fled to Spain for succour, and by his allies defeated his enemies, and recovered his crown. It is undoubtedly curious to find, that, much about the present time, the Carthaginians are confessed to have made a brilliant figure by sea, and to have had strong holds in Sicily and Sardinia. About this time also, we may place their famous engagement with the Phocæans, one of the most formidable maritime powers then in the world, and whose fleet they entirely destroyed.

Eochaidh, by means of his allies, as we have seen, was proclaimed monarch; but we are furnished with no other particulars of him after this, but that, in the twelfth year of his reign, he was cut off by his successors.

Eochaidh, surnamed Fiadh-Mhuine, or the Deer Hunter, and his brother Conuing, called Beg-Oglach, or the Intrepid, of the line of Heremon, became joint monarchs. They divided the kingdom, the first chusing the southern, the other the northern half. Eochaidh was successfully attacked by Luighadh Laimh-Dearg, and slain in battle; and Conuing, unable to oppose the torrent, fled the kingdom, but where he retired to, we are not told. I am inclined to think that it was to France, and that by the aid of the Gauls he was afterwards restored. 3404

Luighadh, son to the renowned Eochaidh, of the Heberian race, was proclaimed monarch. He was called Laimh-Dearg, or of the Bloody Hand, as that was the ensign of his arms, and which is still the crest of his posterity. His antagonist having raised a considerable army, attacked and defeated him, after a reign of seven years. 3409

Conuing, instead of a partition, now saw himself sole monarch of Ireland. Our annals speak of him as a prince in whose administration the glory of Ireland was raised to a very high pinnacle, 3416

by his feats of arms ; and at the same time the most exemplary justice administered to his subjects. But neither his virtue or intrepidity could shield him from the vengeance of his successor. It is remarkable, that in the beginning of this prince's reign we read for the first time, of the irruptions of the Gauls into Italy. For my own part, I do not entertain the least doubt, but that the Irish were deep in these schemes, and that this prince in particular greatly assisted the invaders.

3426 Art, the son or brother of Luighadh, an Heberian, claimed the monarchy ; and, as usual with his predecessors, the sword put a period to his life in the sixth year of his reign.

3432 Fiacha, the son of Muireadhach, son of Simon Breac, of the race of Heremon, after a sway of ten years, gave way to the sword of his successor.

3442 Olioll, the son of Art, an Heberian, assumed the reins of government, and fell in the eleventh year of his reign, by the sword of Airgeadmhar, of the line of Ir.

3453 The Heberians however flock to the standard of his son, by which means the regicide and his party are obliged to fly the kingdom, and Eochaidh VII. the son of Olioll, is saluted monarch. In the seventh year of his sway, Airgeadmhar invades the kingdom, and being joined by Duach, the son of Fiacha, and other malcontents, attacks and defeats the monarch, at Knoc-Aine, near Limerick.

3460 Airgeadmhar, of the line of Ir, is now placed on the throne. Giolla-Caomhain allows him a reign of thirty years, and in this he is followed by archdeacon Lynch *. Dr. Keating makes it twenty-three, and Mr. O'Flaherty but ten years. We will suppose he ruled twenty years. In general I am not fond of departing from the Rein-Riogra ; but reason justifies it in the present

* Grat. Luc p. 62.

instance. But the impetuosity of his former associate Duach, strengthened by the arms of Lughadh, of the line of Heber, deprived Airgeadmhar of life and crown.

Duach, the son of Fiacha, of the house of Heremon, reigned 3480 ten years. He was called Laighrach, which signifies Sudden or Hasty; because he allowed of very little interval between the condemning and punishing of criminals. His former ally Luaghadh, disappointed in a partition of the monarchy, long meditated, and at length gratified his revenge by the defeat and death of Duach.

Lughadh III. the son of Cobthach, son of Eochaidh, of the line 3490 of Heber, was proclaimed monarch, and was cut off in battle, in the seventh year of his reign.

C H A P. IV.

The union of the principal branches of the house of Ir, to preserve the monarchy in their family—the reigns of Aodh, of Dithorba, and Ciombhaoth—building the palace of Emania—the earliest account of stone buildings in Ireland—the mistakes of writers with respect to the reigns of the above princes rectified—of Macha, Mong-Ruadh—Reachta becomes monarch—the nature of his war with the Piets explained.

AODH RUAH, or the Red, son to Badhurn, son to Air- 3497 geadmhar, an Irian, became monarch. This revolution was brought about by three cousin-germans, grandsons to Airgeadmhar; to wit, the present Aodh, Dithorba, the son of De-main, of Uisneach, and Ciombhaoth, the son of Fiontan, of Fion-nabhar,

nabhar, all young princes of great intrepidity, and nearly of an age. To prevent the fatal effects attendant on disunion, they made a solemn agreement, in case of success, that each should rule in rotation twenty-one years; Aodh the eldest, to be the first appointed, and so of the others; and that they should support to the utmost of their power, and obey each prince, according to this compact. Of the present prince we read no more, but that about the period assigned for his resignation he was drowned, passing a cataract in a river in Tirconnel, from him since named Eas-ruadh, or Red-fall.

3518 Dithorba succeeded, according to the original agreement, and died of a malignant fever.

Ciombhaoth was peaceably proclaimed monarch; and has been greatly celebrated for his prudence, his fortitude, and his moderation. He married Macha, called Mong-ruadh, or the Red-haired, daughter to his cousin Aodh. This prince revived all the wise institutions of his great predecessor Ollamh-Fodhla,
 3539 and founded the splendid palace of Emania, next to Tara the most magnificent public structure in ancient Ireland. The remains of this building near Ardmach, may yet be traced; occupying (as I am assured) an uncommon scope of ground. This palace has been celebrated by succeeding writers for its sumptuousness, the splendour and hospitality of its princes, and the intrepidity of its troops. The house of Craobh-Ruadh, adjoining to this great building, the seat of the hereditary knights of Ulster, whose fame and glory have been so often sung by our bards, and recorded by our Senachies, was proportionably grand. This noble structure got the name of Emania, or Eamhuin-Macha, we are told, from the empress Macha, who, with the broche or gold pin of her handkerchief, drew its æra on a proper scale. For Ea, is Irish for a pin, or bodkin, and Muin, the neck. A very ancient poem on this building begins thus, “Eamhuin a luin
 “ aras

“aras Ulladh,” i. e. “Lovely Emania, the seat of Ulster kings.” From this palace the succeeding princes of Ulster were called kings of Emania.

From the Venerable Bede’s account of the building, the church of Lindisfar, which though elegant, he adds—“tamen more Scotorum, non de lapide, sed de robore secto totam composuit;” and from a similar relation of St. Bernard, of an oratory built by St. Malachy *; people have supposed the early buildings of Ireland to be mostly of wood. It is certain, that in a country originally covered with woods, prudence would point out the necessity of a speedy consumption of part of it, the sooner to clear the ground, and correct the moisture of the air. I therefore take it for granted, that for a very considerable time, most of the buildings were of timber; but it is by no means a consequence, that no other materials were used. The superb remains of stone structures yet standing, and many of them in the most sequestered places, sufficiently proves the contrary. We can even trace when stone buildings were first introduced into Ireland; and this St. Cormac tells us, in the Psalter of Cashill, was when Failbhe Foalcorthach, grandfather to the monarch Rotheachta, ruled Munster, i. e. about A. M. 3150! But of these mighty buildings of Tara and Emania, and indeed of much later times, we may with the poet exclaim—

Non indignemur, mortalia corpora solvi;
Cernimus exemplis, oppida posse mori!

We have hitherto related the union between the branches of the Irian line, as we have found it recorded by antecedent writers. A little reflection will however shew, that there must have been some mistake in this account. For at the time of this confederacy

* Vita St. Malach. Episcopi.

these

these different princes must have been, at least twenty-five years old each, if not more, to entitle them to head armies, much less to sway the sceptre. Ciombhaoth, at this calculation was sixty-seven years old, when called to the monarchy; a very unlikely period for such election, especially in a country, where activity and bravery were two essential qualifications for a candidate. Mr. O'Flaherty, sensible of these objections, allows to each of these three princes a reign but of seven years; but in this he is contradicted by all preceding annalists. The truth of the matter must be this. The three houses confederated, and were to rule alternately, not for a certain number of years, but during the natural life of each elector; just as we know Munster was, for some centuries, governed by two houses, according to a similar agreement; so that we may affirm that Ciombhaoth was not the son, but the grandson of Fiontan. The Book of Reigns allows this prince to have ruled twenty-eight years, others but twenty, or twenty-one.

3560 On the death of this prince, according to agreement, the son of Aodh Ruadh, should have succeeded to the throne; but he having no issue male, these of Dithorba put in their claim. There was neither law nor precedent in Ireland for a woman's governing, yet Macha the queen of Ciombhaoth, and daughter of Aodh, possessed of a masculine spirit and great power, insisted upon the succession as her right, and supported her pretensions by the sword. The sons of Dithorba raise a mighty army, and are opposed by the imperial one, headed by this Amazon in person, and the insurgents put to a shameful flight. The disgrace of having the Irish sceptre swayed by a woman, caused numbers again to enlist under the banners of the sons of Dithorba; and a much more formidable army than the former is raised. Herald's are sent to Macha, requiring her peaceably to relinquish the crown, or try the fate of a fresh battle. The latter she chooses, and gains
a decisive

a decisive victory over her competitors. We are told that these sons of Dithorba were taken prisoners, and that the conditions of their liberty, was a formal resignation of their rights to the crown, and the building of the famous palace of Emania. But we have no instances of such tame resignations, even to men; and that this palace was built by Ciombhaoth himself, is evident, because our early annalists, call him Ceadfhath na Heamhna, or the first king of Emania. We must conclude, that finding by this battle all lost, they fell also in it. After a reign of seven years, this intrepid empress died.

Reachta, called Righ-Dhearg, or of the Bloody Arm, of the house of Heber, was the succeeding monarch. We are told, that he was the son of Lughaidh-Laighe, but this must be evidently a mistake, since we see seventy years elapsed since the death of this Lughaidh. He must be therefore grandson to this prince; as we have shewn, that he himself, was not the son, as supposed, but the grandson to Eochaidh. He transported a mighty army into Albany, under the command of Ferc and Iboth, the sons of Irial Glunmhuir, of his house, with which he effectually reduced the Picts*; and is therefore stiled in the Psalter of Cashill, monarch of Ireland and Albion. But as it is certain, that North Britain was tributary to, and dependent on Ireland from the beginning, this necessarily requires some explanation. On account of the contiguity of Ulster to Scotland, the alliances by marriages, and otherwise, were much closer cemented with them, than with the other Irish provinces. Hence in all contests for the monarchy, the house of Ir was sure of support from the Picts, so that humbling them was the sure way to weaken the Irian line. After a reign of twenty years, this warlike prince resigned his crown and life to the superior arm of his successor.

* Grat. Luc. p. 63.

C H A P. V.

Reign of Fughaine the Great—fits out a considerable fleet for the Mediterranean—attacks the Baleares, and unites with the Carthaginians—assists Brennus in his irruption into Italy—transactions of the Gauls misrepresented—a mistake in Plutarch pointed out.

3587 **J**UGH AINE, called More, or the Great, the son of Eochaidh Buadhaigh, the son of Duach Laighreach, of the house of Heremon, was enthroned monarch. His empress was daughter to the French king, and called Cæsaria, surnamed Crotach, or the Lovely. He, as his predecessor, compelled the Picts to acknowledge his sovereignty, and pay their usual tribute. He acquired the title of the Great on account of the glory he gained by his conquests in foreign countries. Our annals inform us, that he equipt a mighty fleet, with which he sailed into the Mediterranean, landed in Africa, and from thence sailed to Sicily, and other islands, and for his great success was saluted with the glorious titles of, *Monarch of Ireland and Albany, and of all the Western Isles of Europe!* But before his departure he summoned the estates of the kingdom at Tara, and laid before them the plan of his intended operations; and such was his power and influence, that he exacted from them a most solemn oath, which was, “By the sun, moon, and stars, and by Neptune,” to bear true allegiance to him and to his posterity, in exclusion of the other royal houses of Ireland. And this by the bye, is the first instance for above two centuries, of the meeting of the Feis-Tamhrach, or general convention of the estates of the kingdom at
Tara,

Tara, except such an one was appointed by Ciombhaoth, which I have not sufficient authority positively to affirm.

Pity it is, that our Senachies have not been more minute in their accounts of the transactions of this reign; but the duty of an historian is to elucidate, not to offuscate, and as Horace says

“Non fumum ex folgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem.”

We have I think already shewn the connections between the Irish and Carthaginians; and there is a passage in Plutarch's life of Timoleon, who was nearly contemporary with this prince, which is worthy attention. He tells us, that at the siege of Syracuse, the Greek mercenaries in the Carthaginian army, in times of truce, frequently met and conversed with their countrymen under Timoleon. That one of the Corinthians addressed his countrymen in the opposite army thus—“Is it possible, O Grecians, that you should be so forward to reduce a city of this greatness, and endowed with so many great advantages, into a state of barbarism, and lend your aid to plant Carthaginians so much nearer to us, who are the worst and bloodiest of men? whereas you should rather wish, that there were many more Sicilies to lie between them and Greece. Have you so little sense as to suppose, that they came hither with an army from Hercules's Pillars, and the Atlantic sea, to hazard themselves for the establishment of Ictes?” From the whole, I think, we may reasonably conclude, that the Carthaginians procured powerful assistance from Ireland, as well as from Spain and Gaul, in their wars with the Romans: nor do I think I should be censured of rashness, if I were to offer a conjecture that the *Sacred Cohort*, the *Delecta* & *Sacra Cohors* of the Carthaginians, mentioned by Diodorus, Curtius, &c. was a select body of Irish troops, whose fidelity and intrepidity could be always depended on, and who were kept in constant pay; if in these days of *distress* and *persecution*, which followed the Reformation,

the Irish kept up a large body of troops in the service of Spain, as we know they did in the reign of Elizabeth, and long after. And if, since the year 1691, a most respectable corps has been kept up both in France and Spain, whose incorruptible fidelity, and *unexampled* bravery, have added new laurels to their drooping country; why doubt the probability and possibility of their lending their troops to the Carthaginians in days of splendour, especially when the country was so full of inhabitants? Nay I persuade myself, that it was an useful piece of state policy in the victorious prince, to engage a restless military in foreign wars, to preserve domestic tranquility; and this will explain why this body were honoured with the title of *Sacra Cohors*, as being denizens of the *Insula Sacra*. To strengthen this conjecture, as our legions in Gaul were called *Fine-Gall*, and in Albany *Fine-Albin*, we may well suppose that the *Fine-Tomharaig*, or African legions, so often met with in old MSS. meant no other, than the Irish cohorts in that service.

That the Carthaginians were a learned as well as a most powerful people, will not be disputed; nay, from the great numbers of their historians, poets, and philosophers, we may safely affirm, that they were a much more polished people than the Romans themselves. Unhappily for arts and letters, the Romans adopted the wretched policy of the Greeks, in representing all their enemies as barbarous; and this fact cannot be more melancholily proved, than by their accounts of these very Carthaginians. In destroying their city, they took care with it, to destroy their archives, and all their writings; in short—"almost every thing they wrote that had any appearance of literature or true history," as the writers of the *Universal History* observe*. On this account many relations of their exploits, and those of their allies, are strangely mutilated, and often without dates. Thus we read, that the Carthaginians conquered Sardinia, the

* Volume xvi. p. 661. octavo.

Balearas, now called Majorca and Minorca, with other islands in the Mediterranean. Port Mahon in the latter, we are told *, was so called from a Mago, supposed a Carthaginian general, and a brother to Hannibal; but in a case uncertain as this is on one side, I scruple not to affirm that it was so called, from our monarch Jughaine, who is called in Latin Hugonius, and who we see was the friend and ally of Carthage, and assuredly assisted them in their wars in Sicily, as the Irish did them under Hannibal in Italy, or what would have brought Irish swords there †? Add to this, that from the uncommon expertness of the people in flinging stones, these islands got the name of Baleares; and it is pretty remarkable, that in our ancient armies, were always a large body of slingers; and so sure were they of hitting an object with the greatest certainty, that they scarce ever failed of execution, when within the force of their machine, which was called Cran-Tubal. This, with the sword, the javelin, and the broad ax, were the weapons of our military. Thus we may suppose, that Jughaine subdued these islands about the year 3590; and that he, after this, united with Hannibal, the son of Gisco, in his expedition into Sicily, in which he destroyed the cities of Selinus and Himera, &c. and this exactly corresponds with the time in which these last exploits were achieved.

Soon after his return from this glorious expedition, we find the Gauls prepare for an irruption into Italy, and Brennus appointed general in this expedition. It is something more than a mere presumption, to suppose, that a nation so warlike, and so fond of extra-marine expeditions, as we see the Irish were, would not remain idle spectators in this war, especially when we reflect on the close affinity between the Irish and French monarchs at this time. I therefore take it for granted, that, if not princi-

* Liv. lib. xxviii. n. 37.

† See chap. ii. of this book, p. 139.

pals, the Irish were a party in this famous expedition; and this is the true reason why this prince is called, in the Book of Reigns, *Joughaine More, Maith Mian-Gall*, i. e. Jughaine the Great, a chief friendly to the Gauls. Indeed, the false lights which the transactions of these remote days have been thrown into by the Romans, and so viewed by ALL succeeding writers, would seem to damp every generous attempt to restore part of that dignity to the Celtic and Scythic nations of Europe, which, with their liberty, they were robbed of by the Romans. Thus Voltaire delivers himself on the present subject*. “If we read that 360 years
 “after the foundation of Rome, the Gauls spread desolation over
 “all Italy, and besieged even the Capitol; is it not to the Romans
 “we are indebted for the information? If a century after, others
 “of them invaded Greece, to who, but to these, are we indebted
 “for the account? There rests no monuments of these emigra-
 “tions amongst us. It proves only, *that we were very numerous,*
 “*and very uncivilized.*” But had M. Voltaire given himself time to reflect on this very war, as a philosopher and an historian should do; did he but consider the spirit and moderation displayed by Brennus, when he discovered that the Roman ambassadors sent to him, on the part of the Clusians, instead of being ministers of peace, so far disgraced their characters as to become active parties in the war; not to mention the uncommon address and abilities necessary to unite different nations, and speaking different languages, in one common cause, he certainly would alter his sentiments, and not hold forth to public view, so disgraceful a picture of ancient Europe. He tells us, that to the Romans only we are indebted for the account of this war. But were the Gauls so barbarous and illiterate as not to be able to transmit to posterity any records of these times? they surely were

* Avant à propos à l'Histoire Universelle.

not. Cæsar will be my witness, that arts, sciences, and letters, were highly cultivated by them *. To whose fault is this silence of the Gauls to be attributed then? to the Romans; the polished Romans themselves! as they treated the Carthaginians, and indeed as they treated all other learned nations, who had the unhappiness to fall under their tyrannical yoke, so they treated the Gauls. They destroyed all their records whatever; and they made it penal to study in any other language but their own, and by this means, made it almost impossible for future writers, how well inclined soever, to contradict them. But, fortunately for letters, the Irish nation, by their valour and generous love of independency, not only preserved themselves a free people at home, but held forth their arms, to support every struggle for liberty in the neighbouring states; and their history *alone* proves how different the ancient state of Europe really was, from what supposed.

Plutarch in his life of Camillus tells us, as soon as the account of Rome's being taken by the Gauls reached Greece, that Heraclides of Pontus, *who lived at the very time*, (though our author says soon after) in his Book De Animâ relates, "that a certain report came from the West, that an army of Hyperboreans had taken a Greek city called Rome, seated somewhere on the Great Sea." But I do not wonder says Plutarch, "that so fabulous a writer should embellish his account of the taking of Rome with such turgid words as *Hyperborean* and *Great Sea*".

And yet for these remarks Plutarch is himself censured by Dacier, Dryden, and other translators. For nothing is more certain, than that the ancients called the Mediterranean sea, Mare Magnum, as conveying passengers to all parts of the world, in opposition to the Euxine, and other adjoining seas. Nor is Plutarch's

* Lib. vi.

remark on the Hyperboreans better founded ; since they were at that time, and long before and after it, a great and powerful people. Nor are these commentators on our author to be at all justified, when they affirm that the Greeks called all northern nations indiscriminately Hyperboreans. It is *evident*, that by Hyperboreans, the early Greeks understood the inhabitants of a single island only ; and which island I have shewn in the present, as well as in a former work *, to be Ireland. As then Rome was seated on the Great Sea, and the Hyperboreans at this time a powerful maritime state, we may conclude, that Heraclides was better informed in these matters (especially being a contemporary) than our author supposes ; and that the Irish made a distinguished figure in this war.

This monarch had twenty-five children, of which twenty-two were sons. As he laboured to secure the succession to his own family, it was an act of prudence to weaken the power of the provincial kings. The mode of taxation before this, for national exigencies, was directed by each prince in his own province. Jughaine divided the kingdom into twenty-five parts, in honour of his issue, and *appointed himself* the tax upon each portion, and the officers who collected it ; and this manner of cessing remained in force for 300 years. Of the numerous issue of this mighty prince two only are handed to us, as the chief supporters of the Heremonian line, namely Laoghaine-Lore, and Cobhthaigh-Caolmbreag, and from whom all the succeeding branches of this illustrious line claim their origin. The Book of Reigns says this prince ruled Ireland forty years ; but the generally received opinion is, that after a reign of thirty years, he was inhumanly murdered by his own brother ; who surviving him but a day and a half, has not been placed in the list of Irish monarchs. Roighne,

* Introduction to Irish History, p. 1.

called Rosg-athach, or the Learned in Poetry, a son of Jughaine, is highly celebrated in our annals, for an excellent code of laws wrote and published by him, in the life-time of his father.

C H A P. VI.

Loaghairé proclaimed monarch—murdered by his own brother, who succeeds him—Maon, grandson to Laoghairé, is conveyed to France, and soon arrives at the supreme command of the Gallic troops—invades Ireland, and gains the monarchy—a curious remark of Cenau explained—of Meilge, Modh-Chorb, and Aongus, successive monarchs of Ireland.

LOAGHAIRE II. son of Jughaine, immediately heads a select body of troops, surprises the regicide, disperses his party, and causes him to be put to an ignominious death. His courage and activity make him thought worthy to reign, and he is saluted monarch, in exclusion of his elder brother. Cobhthaigh with consternation beholds himself not only precluded from the monarchy for the present, but his future expectations destroyed, by the great merit and valour of his nephew. Destitute of support, he dared not proclaim his pretensions and his injuries, and seemingly applauded the government he so much detested. But this concealed spirit sensibly affected his constitution, which encreased on hearing of the birth of a grand-nephew; and he became at length so emaciated as to take to his bed. The monarch sensibly afflicted at the melancholy situation of a brother, whom he tenderly loved, paid him a visit; and then it was that the

cruel Cobhthaigh saw the possibility, and took the resolution of assassinating his brother. He therefore very artfully, whilst he acknowledged the honour of this visit, kindly complained that he came not with the affection of a brother, but with the state of a great prince, attended by his nobility, and by his guards; and he requested, when next he visited him, it might be as a brother, and unattended, as it would afford the highest proof of this love. The credulous monarch, charmed with this feigned mark of affection, assured his brother of his compliance; and accordingly in his next visit, totally unattended, and conversing carelessly with him on the bed-side, he suddenly stabbed him to the heart, with a dagger he had provided and concealed for that purpose. But we cannot be bad by halves! more murder must follow to secure the succession! Oilliol-Aine, the brave son of the deceased, is privately made away with; and the life of his grandson Maon (like that of Louis XV. in his minority) is only saved as being supposed of so weak a frame, as to be incapable of raising any future disturbances. Yet the fallibility of human wisdom, and the small degree of happiness that arises from gratifying the ambition of the wicked, cannot be more fully exemplified, than in the present instance; where we shall behold this youth, whose tender age and imbecillities the tyrant despised, in his turn depose and kill the murderer of his father and grandfather, and govern the kingdom with great splendour and glory.

3619 Cobhthaigh, by these horrid assassinations gained the crown. He was called Caol-Breag, from Caol, which imports lean or emaciated, and Breag, from Magh-Breag, in the county of Wicklow, where he committed these foul murders. Notwithstanding the atrociousness of his crimes, yet we find he reigned peaceably for thirty years. But the friends of the young Maon took care to convey the prince far from the reach of the monarch, fearing the capriciousness of his temper. The king of South Munster

Munster received him with great humanity, and had him bred up in his court ; and here the soft passion of love found a way to his tender heart, the object being the lovely Moriat, daughter to his protector. His friends, anxious for his safety, did not trust him long here, but had him conveyed privately to France, with only nine attendants in his retinue. The French king received him with all the honours due to his blood, and to the close affinity between them. He soon rose in the army ; his valour and prudence, much beyond his years, before twenty-five, acquired him the supreme command of the Gallic troops. He wanted not for partizans at home to trumpet his fame ; and the greatness of his exploits soon revived in the breast of the fair Moriat, sentiments of a much warmer nature than what she had supposed. Love is full of expedients ; and she found out a method to remind this prince of their former amity. Craftine, a musician of her father's court, was her confidant. She sent him privately to France, with a letter and a rich present of jewels to Maon. After delivering his credentials, he played on his harp, and sung to it an ode, in which he was praised with great delicacy, and his principal actions boldly recorded ; concluding with a wish, that he would for the future exert his power to recover his country, and revenge the blood of his father and grandfather. He enquired who the author of this ode was. To be praised by the fair, is the highest gratification to a generous mind : Craftine told him, it was the lovely Moriat herself. At once all his former tenderness revived, and love and glory now only employed his thoughts. He sends back the harper, with private instructions to his friends ; and solicits aid of the monarch of France, to support his pretensions to the throne of Ireland. His request is granted, and with a select body of Gauls, he invades both Scotland and Ireland. He himself landed in the harbour of Wicklow ; and being informed that Cobhthaigh kept

his court at Dindrigh, near the Barrow, in Leinster, thither he immediately marched his troops, attacked this fortress sword in hand, and put the garrison to the sword, with the monarch himself, and thirty princes who were with him there assembled. For this I have the authority of a very ancient historian; and Forcheirethen, a celebrated antiquarian, and contemporary with
 3649 Connor, king of Ulster, before the birth of Christ, gives us the names of these different princes, in a poem preserved in the Leabhar-Lecan*; and taken from the Book of Leinster. The words of the historian are these—"Ase an Labhra fo do dheacuidh tar muir go Ngallach-buine, do cum Nalban and Eirin, is leis ro ort Dind-righ for Cobhthach and 30 Righ the uime." i. e. It is this Labhra that crossed the sea, with bands of Gauls, to Scotland and Ireland; and with them destroyed the royal fortress, with the monarch Cobhthach, and thirty princes surrounding him.

From the same authority I find it affirmed, that no Irish prince extended his power farther than this Labhra. For this reason it is, that he is called in the Book of Reigns Laoch ro Cath, i. e. the Hero first in Battle. That besides his conquests in Britain, he became also a king in Gaul; and it is singular enough, and I apprehend highly worth attention, what Cenau, or Cenalis, bishop of Avranches, in a learned work on the French nation, asserts; which is, "that at an early period, a people called Hermioniens, but rather Heremonians, possessed the sea-coasts of Brittany." To commemorate this event and their ancestry, he tells us, "that the dukes of Bretagne, placed ermines in their arms †." To strengthen this relation, I have but to remind the reader, how careful our antiquarians have been to distinguish from which branch of the three houses or the royal line of Ire-

* Book iii. p. 92, &c.

† Mezeray Origine des François, p. 357.

land each monarch descended ; and that the present prince, his grand uncle, his grand, and great grandfather, who successively ruled Ireland, were ALL Heremonians. Add to this, that about the period in question, the Gauls and their allies with a powerful army invaded Italy. The fair Mamonian Moriat was this prince's consort. The reason why he is better known by our annalists by the name Labhra, than his original one Maon, is this : as soon as he had surprised and cut off his predecessor, a Druid, who was witness of the action, and in his interest, cried out hastily, Does he speak ? on which account he went by the name of Labhradh, which signifies Speech, to which the epithet Luingscach, or of the Navy, was added, from Luingos, a fleet. But though this question of the Druid is mentioned to explain the cause of this name only, yet it evidently imports much more, and ought to be adverted to.—By the Irish constitution, it was not enough, that every candidate for the monarchy must be of the royal line of Milesius, but he must be also perfect, not only in all his faculties, but in his make. It had been reported of Maon, when a youth, that he was dumb ; so that the question was pointing out to the people, that the report was groundless. He first introduced into Ireland the use of the Laighean or Gaulish spear, and as it was mostly confined to the province of Gaillian, it ever after was distinguished by the rest of the nation, by the name of Coige-Laighean, or the Province of the Spears. After a glorious reign of nineteen years, he fell in battle by the arm of his successor.

Meilge, the son of Cobhthach, was proclaimed monarch. He 3668 was called Molbhnthach, or the Praise-worthy, on account of his just administration. This division between these two branches of the Heremonian line, animated the posterity of Heber ; and after several conflicts, this prince at length was cut off, and his army defeated.

Modh.

3685 Modh-Chorb, was the first prince who had spirit and power sufficient to break through oaths sworn to, and the national decree passed in favour of Jughaine the Great, and his posterity, in exclusion of the other royal houses. He is said to be the son, but I think, with more truth, the grandson of Cobhthaigh-Caom, son to the monarch Reachta, of the line of Heber. He is called in the Psalter of Cashill, Modh Chorb-Claire, as his chief palace and principal residence was in Clare, instead of being at Tara. He was slain in battle in the seventh year of his reign, by Aongus.

3692 Aongus II. called Ollamh, or the Doctor, the son of Oilliolla, son of Labhra, of the race of Heremon, was saluted monarch. Of this prince the Book of Reigns says—"Aongus-Ollamh, a "hoct-deag, do rad a Socht Sluagh saor *Gbreig*." i. e. Aongus, for eighteen years, lead his armies against the Greeks. When we compare this relation, with the accounts given us, by Greek and Roman writers, of the irruption of the Gauls into Greece, and note how exactly the reign of the present monarch accords with the time of this remarkable invasion, we must I apprehend be convinced, that our annals deserve the highest credit. During this foreign war, probably encouraged to rid the kingdom of so many turbulent spirits, Aongus's enemies were not idle. Jarereo raised a potent army, cut off his enemy, and as usual became his successor.

C H A P. VII.

The reigns of Jarereo, Fearcorb, Conla, Oilíoll III. Adamar, Eochaidh VIII. Feargus—of Aongus III. he assists the Carthaginians—the source from whence his present majesty is descended—of Conall, Niadh Seamhuin, Eanda, Criomthan, Ruighruidh the Grand, Fiondhabhar, Breasal, Lughaidh IV. Congall, Duach, and of the Clana Deagha; Fachtna, Eochaidh IX. and of the different partitions of Ireland—power of the Heremonians, and origin of the palace of Cruachan.

JAREREO, the son of Meilge, son of Cobhthach, son of 2710
Jughaine, of the blood of Heremon, reigned seven years, and was slain by his successor. He was surnamed Gleo-fathach, as being a prince of great wisdom and accomplishments, as the words denote.

Fearcorb, the son of Modh-Corb, of the line of Heber, as- 2717
cended the throne. His reign, the Book of Munster tells us, lasted but *five* years, when the sword of his successor cut his way through him to the Irish throne.

Conla, the son of Jarereo, son of Meilge, reigned five years, 2722
and died a natural death, at his palace of Tara.

Oilíoll III. surnamed Caish-fhiachlach, or of the Bad Teeth, 2727
the son of Conla, was also his successor. Though he reigned twenty five years, yet we find nothing remarkable of him in our records, but that he fell in battle as usual, and by the sword of his successor.

Adamar, called Foltchaoín, or of the Smooth Hair, the son of 2752
Fearcorb, of the race of Heber, ascended the throne. The
Psalter

Psalter of Cashill tells us, his empress was of the Danaan race, and named Flidhis. He was slain by Eochaidh.

2757 Eochaidh VIII. the son of Oilioll, son of Conla, an Heremonian, by the death of his antagonist satisfied his revenge for the loss of his father, and his ambition by the acquisition of sovereignty; but was himself obliged to give way to the superior arm of his successor.

2767 Feargus, called Forteamhuil, or the Strong, the son of Breasal-Breac, son of Aongus-Ollamh, son of Oilioll, son of Labhra, the second branch of the Heremonian line, reigned eleven years. He was remarkably intrepid; and in his reign we read, that the Gauls made an irruption into Italy with 50,000 foot, and 20,000 horse, and were joined by the Gessatæ. I certainly conclude, that the different Irish monarchs heartily promoted these frequent invasions of Italy, in order to thin the kingdom of these turbulent and daring factions, never happier than in the midst of contention and carnage; to this I shall add, that the Irish infantry were called Coisighe. He fell by the sword of Aongus.

2778 Aongus III. the son of Eochaidh, elder branch of the Heremonian line, by Jughaine, was proclaimed monarch. His reign was long and prosperous; and in it the second Punic war broke out, so destructive to the Romans, and in the end so ruinous to Carthage. That the Irish, far from idle spectators of this war, were deeply engaged in it, as allies to the Carthaginians, I have not the least doubt; and this perhaps will best account for the length of his reign, and the internal peace of the kingdom, during it. We have already observed, that the Carthaginians fought their battles by means of their allies and their mercenaries; amongst the former of whom the Irish must certainly be placed. I have already offered my reasons, why I supposed their celebrated *Sacra & Dilecta Cohors*, were a brigade of Irish; and the Carthaginian swords, found near the plains of Cannæ, and
pre-

presented by Sir William Hamilton to the British Museum, being found in figure, texture, and length, exactly similar to our ancient Irish ones, adds strength to my conjectures. It has been remarked by Roman writers, that the swords of the Gauls were of bad metal, frequently bent, and easily broke and battered; but by the report of the assay master of the mint *, the Carthaginian and Irish swords were of mixt metal, highly elastic, and polished, bore a very sharp edge, and so formed as to suffer no injury by time. Here then is Roman evidence, even in the make of their arms, to distinguish the Carthaginians and Irish from the other confederates, and enemies of Rome! But notwithstanding the glory of this reign, it was greatly tarnished by an act of incest: for being overtaken in liquor, we are told, Aongus violated the chastity of his own daughter; and the consequence of this act was a son; and from which he was called Tuirmheach, or the Shameful. The better to conceal this crime, the infant was exposed in an open boat; but in case he was found, care was taken, by his dress, to denote him of royal blood; for he was dressed in purple ornamented with gold, and some jewels. Some time after the boat was found by fishermen; acknowledged, and given out to nurse. The child was called Fiacha, to which the epithet Fear-Mara, or the Sea-Man, was annexed; and from this prince the royal line of Scotland are descended.

As his posterity have made a most distinguished figure in the histories of Ireland and Britain; and that from him, by the female line, his present majesty is descended; it may be here proper to note, that Aongus procured for Fiacha large possessions in Ulster, to which his son Olioll Aron succeeded; and that (as we shall see) many of his successors became kings of Munster, and some of them monarchs of Ireland. Indeed, upon a close in-

* Governor Pownall's Letter, already quoted.

vestigation of the matter, it appears that children got out of wedlock formerly, were very far from being held in a disrespectful light. We behold Agamemnon † encouraging Teucer to pursue the heroic steps of his brother Ajax; for though not the legitimate son of Telamon, he was not less dear to him. Ulysses ‡ confesses himself the son of a concubine; and though Gideon § had seventy children by different wives, yet Abimelech, the issue of a concubine, and even his servant, was chosen king of Sechem! The children of Jacob got on the bodies of his wives' handmaids, are ranked with his legitimate ones. The celebrated Count de Dunois, was better known by the name of the Bastard of Orleans; and the letters patent of William the Conqueror, to Alain count of Bretagne, begin thus—"Guillaume dit le "Batard, roi d'Angleterre, &c." Thiery, a natural son to Clovis, ranked as his other children ||. In Ireland, in the present and in many succeeding instances, we shall see illegitimate children enjoy every rank and dignity in the state, which their blood entitled them to; and some of the most illustrious families in the kingdom, derive their blood from similar sources; as O'Connor Kerry, O'Connor, Corcumruadh, O'Loughlin, O'Ferral, Mac Rannel, &c. Besides the above Fergus, Aongus had a legitimate son called Eanda, from whom the Sioll-Cuin in general are descended. A period was at length put to the life of Aongus by the sword, at Tara.

2808 Connall Callamhrach, son to Eiderfgeoil, brother to Aongus, and son of Eochaidh, of the same house, mounted the throne, and was cut off in the battle, by his successor.

2813 Niadh Seamhuin, the son, but I think the grandson, of Adhainhar, son of Fearchorb, of the line of Heber, reigned seven years. The

† Iliad, lib. viii. ver. 281.

§ Judges, chap. viii. and ix.

‡ Odysssey, lib. iv. ver. 202.

|| Selden's Titles of Honour, p. 535.

Book of Munster says, that his mother was deeply versed in magic and forcery, and by this means procured for her son the crown; but the sword of his successor, like that of Alexander, soon cut through this gordian knot.

Eanda, called Aighneach, or the Munificent, the son of Aongus Tuirmheach, of the house of Heremon, after a reign of twenty years, fell in battle. 2821

Criomthan, called Cosgrach, or the Slaughterer, on account of his execution in battle, the son of Feidhlim, son of Feargus, second branch of the Heremonians, after ruling Ireland four years, was cut off in battle. 2841

Ruighruidhe, called the Great, the son of Sithrighe, son of Dubh, son of Fhomhar, of the house of Ir, was proclaimed monarch. This was the first prince of his house who attempted to break through the oath sworn to by his ancestors, for themselves, and for their posterity, to bear true allegiance to Jughaine the Great, and to his issue. During his administration, the war between Masinissa and the Carthaginians broke out; which was soon followed by the third Punic war, and by the total destruction of that mighty republic by the Romans. Engaged deeply in support of their allies, as the Irish were in these wars, we presume was one reason, why the reign of this prince was so long, and (at home) so peaceable, as great numbers of turbulent spirits were far removed. Some allow him to have ruled seventy years; but thirty is what is mostly admitted. From him, his posterity were afterwards known by the name of Clana-Ruighridhe. 2845

Jonadhbhar, son of Niadhsamhuin, of the house of Heber, was proclaimed monarch. He humbled the Picts, and obliged them to pay an heavy tribute. Keating, O'Flaherty, &c. allow him but a reign of three years; but Giolla-Caomhain, and the Psalter of Cashill affirm, that he was monarch for nine years. 2875

3884 Breafal, the son of Ruighridhe the Great, of the line of Ir, by the death of his predecessor, reached the throne. He was called Bodhiabha, because in his reign a fatal pestilential disorder affected cows and oxen, not unlike what has been, for above thirty years past, so fatal in Holland and Germany. He fell in battle, and was succeeded by the conqueror.

3895 Lughaidh IV. the son of Jonadhmhar, an Heberian, was proclaimed monarch. The Book of Munster tells us, he was called Luighne, because educated at the court of Leinster. It also informs us, that Criomthan his eldest son, was his Righ-Damhna, or declared successor, till cut off in battle by Conghlas, or Conall Clairingneach. The very learned Dr. O'Conry, a Catholic clergyman, of the diocese of Cloyne, in a posthumous work *, judges, that the Taniste was general of the national troops, as well as chief of the laws; and he instances the case of Mac Con, and Olioll-Ollum, in the third century. From the present authority, and happening at so early a period, I am inclined to think, that the Righ-Damhna was the presumptive heir to the crown; and the Taniste the heir to a lordship, or confined territory, and of course, that the law of Tanistry regarded the succession to estates only.

3900 Congall, brother to Breafal, and son to Ruighridhe, of the house of Ir, by the defeat and death of Lughaidh, became monarch. He invaded Munster, says the Psalter of Cashill, with a potent army, Cairbre Luig, being then king, raised heavy contributions on the country, and carried away hostages. But the son of Cairbre had his revenge, having in a bloody battle defeated the imperial army, and with own hand cut off the monarch.

* Collectanea, No. iii. p. 270.

Duach, son to Cairbre, the son of Lughaidh, of the house of Heber, by this decisive blow raised himself to the throne. He had a younger brother called Deaghadh, both of whom the Book of Munster declares to be as gallant and intrepid heroes as Ireland then produced. The same authority acquaints us, that violent disputes arose between them about the succession, Deaghadh aiming *unjustly*, to supplant his elder brother. By this censure of St. Cormoc we plainly perceive, that where abilities were equal, the *senior branch* was always judged most worthy to rule. Duach, though well informed of the underhand proceedings of Deaghadh, yet invited him to court, as if totally ignorant of his designs. As soon as he arrived, he was seized and his eyes taken out; and this, St. Cormoc observes, was the first instance in Ireland of this kind of punishment. His mother Eithne, hearing the melancholly fate of her darling son, ceased not weeping and lamenting till she died; and for this she got the appellation Gubha, or the Sorrowful. Hence Duach was called Dalta-Deaghadh, or the Blinder of his brother Deaghadh.

The learned O'Flaherty treats the above story as a fable; says that Duach had no brother, and that he got the epithet Dalta-Deaghadh, from the generous reception he afforded to the exiled Deaghadh, and from his adopting him as his child. But neither the Psalter of Cashill, nor the Book of Lecan, which he quotes on this occasion, justify his assertion; to the reverse, the first is my authority for what has been said.

The adopted Deaghadh, was the son of Suin, the son of Olioll-Aron, or rather Erne (so called) from the lands surrounding this lake, given at the expence of the ancient Belgic inhabitants to his father Fiacha, by the monarch Aongus, the son of Fiacha-fear-muire, the son of Aongus Tuirmheach, of the line of Heremon. The line of Ir, and kings of Emania, were highly jealous of these new settlers, and of the overgrown power of the line of Heremon.

They

They therefore made war on, and at length expelled Deaghadh from Ulster. To the monarch Duach, and under whose eye he was educated, he applies for aid; and by him he is received with the affection of a parent. So great was the power of the Irian line at this time, that, not satisfied with expelling Deaghadh their province, they made war on the monarch who had appointed him his Righ-Damhna, or successor, and in a bloody engagement defeated the imperial army, and slew Duach. Deaghadh by his prudent conduct, had so far gained on the affections of the Mamonians, as to be elected king of the two Munsters in his stead; and his posterity, for some generations after, continued, in conjunction with the true or Heberian line, to govern that province. It is here to be noticed, that, wherever the Ernains, or Deaguids of Munster are mentioned in succeeding periods of our history, they are to be understood as the issue of this branch of the Heremonian line only.

3922 The Ultonians by the defeat and death of Duach, proclaimed Fachtna of the house of Ir, monarch. He was the son of Cais, son to Ruighridhe the Great, who was the eleventh generation from Argeadmhar. He bears an high character in our annals for his prudence and wisdom, for which he acquired the epithet Fathach. He fell by the sword of his successor, having reigned sixteen years.

3938 Eochaidh IX. the son of Finn, the son of Finlogha, son to Easamhuin, the son of Labhra-Luire, son of Eanda Aighneach, son to Aongus, of the house of Heremon, was elected monarch. His mother was Benia, daughter to Criomthan, son to the monarch Lughaidh. He was called Feidh-liocho, or of the Heavy Sighs, being subject to great dejections, on account of the loss of three of his sons, princes of great intrepidity, who fell in the battle of Dromchriadh. His queen Cloth, was called Fionn, or the Fair; and these sons she had at one birth, hence they were called

called the three Fincamhna, as if saying the issue of Fionn, or the Fair, at one birth.

Ireland suffered several political divisions, according to the interests of the different houses that governed it. The first partition of the country from the landing of the Milesians, was, between Heber and Heremon, into two parts; Heber and his posterity possessing themselves of the southern half, and the Heremonians of the northern. One hundred and thirty-three years after, a similar partition took place, between the two sons of Eibhrie. Jughaine the Great, to insure the succession to his own race, divided the kingdom into twenty-five parts, and allotted the assessments for each tract. The present monarch formed the whole into five provinces; viz. Munster, Leinster, Conaught, Ulster, and Meath; this last to be always the domain of the reigning monarch.

There is no period of our remote history fuller of great domestic convulsions, nor better attested, than from the present æra to the Incarnation. But though we are still in possession of the relations of these days of heroism and chivalry, yet neither the precise *times*, nor the real nature of these intestine broils have been delivered to us, with the precision both merit! For instance, Connor, king of Ulster, and Connal Cearnach, both of the house of Ir, are supposed to have outlived the crucifixion, though both great grandsons of Ruighridhe the Great, who was inaugurated monarch, as we have seen, A. M. 2845! Again, the celebrated Meibhe, queen of Conaught, and daughter to the present monarch, at about an hundred years old, is said to be killed by the son of Connor, and in his father's life-time too! A little attention to the old MSS. will however reconcile the whole accounts to reason and chronology. Placing the reign of this king of Emania in the present period, will do this; for, though Feargus, the son of Leighe, is said to be king of Ulster, by Eochaidh's appointment; and that on his death Feargus, the son of Roigh,
was

was his successor, yet we see Connor compelled the latter to fly his country, and seek an asylum in Conaught, at the very time in question. At the same time Feargus, called Fairge, or of the Sea, on account of his navies, was king of Leinster; and Daire, the son of Deaghadh, the northern exile, king of Munster.

Such was the situation of affairs at this time. Eochaidh, reflecting on the great power of his house; himself monarch, one of his line king of Leinster, the other ruling Munster, presented to him a pleasing prospect of reducing the entire kingdom to his power. Conaught, though paying its proportion of the national taxes, yet was still governed by its ancient princes of the Danaan line; and he had formed the plan, and in part succeeded, of making this province also more dependent on him. To this purpose he resolved to erect a more stately and a more central palace than Tara, and, as usual in all great events, consulted his Druids. After performing the ceremonies usual on such occasions, they announced that Druim na Ndruidh, (a place in Conaught celebrated for its great cave and Druid mysteries) was the only proper place for this great work. He summoned the the princes who then governed the province, to alienate certain portions of land, and to contribute otherwise to this great work. Two absolutely refused to comply, till it was agreed to by a national assembly, to be convened for that purpose at Tara; but Tinne III. more complaisant, or perhaps previously engaged, declared himself ready to do whatever was required to please the monarch. Eochaidh, pleased at this mark of submission, bestowed on him his daughter Meibhe as a wife; and soon after, by the destruction of the other princes, he appointed him absolute king of the province. However his reign was not of long duration, since he was some time after killed at Tara, by Ma Ceacht, when Meibhe reigned singly and unopposed queen of Conaught. The palace of Eochaidh was now finished with great splendour; and its
proxi-

proximity added weight to the administration of Meibhe. After him it was called Rath-Eochaidh, or Eochaidh's palace; but in honour to his empress he named it Rath-Cruachan, Cruachan being her name, and by which it is known at this day. We find this palace celebrated in the days of St. Patrick, as one of the royal houses of Loaghaire. In the height of his great designs, he quitted this world, of a natural death, at Tara, in the twelfth year of his reign.

C H A P. VIII.

Eochaidh X.—singular terms of his niece's marriage—invasion of Ulster—national assembly at Cruachan, and the Ulster war renewed—battle of Muirtheimhne—Deirdre carried off by the sons of Uisneach, and the fatal consequences—death of Meibhe—insolence and banishment of the bards—the ancient mode of interment—the king of Ulster's life saved by the operation of the trepan, and remarks on the early state of physic—of Eidersgeoil, and Nuadha II.

HIS brother, who was called Eochaidh, peaceably succeeded to the throne, and steadily pursued the system adopted by the deceased. The Conacians, uneasy to be ruled by a female, he gratified, by marrying his niece Meibhe to Olioll-more, brother to Cairbre, now king of Leinster, who were both Heremonians. By this marriage he reconciled in some measure the Damnonii, to the new government; since Olioll by his mother Matha-Muireasg, was of that blood. It is singular enough, what has been handed to us in relation to this marriage. We are told,

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that

that Olioll being advanced in years, a preliminary article was, that she should, when so inclined, be free to indulge herself in illicit pleasures; and we find she made use of this privilege. In the present reign Cuire, or Conraoi, the son of Daire, succeeded his father in the government of North Munster, and Eochaidh Abhruadh, in the South.

Feargus Roigh, being compelled, by the superior power of Connor, the son of Neassa, and his cousin, to fly Ulster, applied at Cruachan for the protection of the monarch, who had nothing so much at heart as weakening the northern line, by opposing its princes to each other. Nor was Feargus less solicitous to gain the support of the Conacians, which through Meibhe he effectually secured; for being a prince of uncommon bravery, and of great gallantry, he soon found the way to her heart of TINDER; and she bore to him three sons at one birth, who were the sources of most illustrious families; to wit, Ciar, ancestor to O'Connor Kerry, from him so called; Coro, from whom O'Connor, Corcumruidh, O'Loughlin, &c. and Cormac, who is ancestor to the O'Ferrals, Mac Rannels, &c.

Secure of the support of the monarch through interest, and of his niece through affection, Feargus soon raised a mighty army, in which some of the most intrepid knights of Ireland went volunteers. In the relation of this famous invasion, yet preserved, called Tain-bho-Cuailgne, or the Spoils of Cattle at Cualgne, in the county of Lowth, we are entertained with the order of the march of the troops. They were led on by Feargus: the queen of Conaught seated in an open chariot, with her Afion, or crown of gold, on her head, followed; her retinue were placed in four chariots more, so disposed, at the sides and rear, that the dust and foam of the cavalry should not stain her royal robes: and here it is necessary to be observed, that our ancient princes never appeared in public without their ensigns of royalty.

alty. But though these troops could not force the Ulster army to a general engagement, nor yet gain their end, which was the dethronement of Connor, yet they miserably wasted the country, and brought back with them an immense booty, in cattle and other rich effects, notwithstanding the utmost efforts of the Ultonians, though headed by the renowned Conall, and all the champions of Craobh-Ruadh! This prey gave rise to several succeeding invasions, and many bloody battles were fought, in which the knights in both armies acquired glory and immortality, as the battle of Fion-Corratha, of Bos na Righ, near the Boyne, &c. &c.

The repeated engagements, and the losses being pretty near equal, gradually lessened the desire of extermination on both sides; and Conall Cearnach, grand-master of the knights of Ulster, seized this opportunity with a select body of troops, to go on a foreign expedition, in which wealth and glory were the objects. We are not informed to what place this armament was directed; but it was, most probably to assist the Britons or Gauls, now greatly distressed by Cæsar. The amorous Meibhe thought this a favourable opportunity to renew the war in favour of her beloved Feargus. An assembly of the chiefs of the Heremonians was, by order of the monarch, convened at Cruachan. At this Feis, Meibhe appears to have taken an uncommonly active part. On the part of the monarch appeared Eare, the son of Cairbre, with his knights, and a select body of nobility and others. Lugha, the son of Conraoi, with his Clana Deaghadh, or Munster knights, and Mac Nead, the son of Fin and Connor, the son of Rossa, with the Clana Boisghne, or Leinster champions, composed this great assembly.

Meibhe opens the debates, by deploring the unhappy state of the kingdom in general, the province of Conaught in particular, was reduced to, through the ambition of Connor, and the in-

trepidity of the Craobh-Ruadh, or Ulster knights; and that the national tranquility depended on his overthrow. She then addresses herself to Lugha; reminds him of the death of his father, the celebrated Conraoi, by Cuchullain, captain of the Ulster knights, and of the distresses his ancestors were reduced to, by the house of Ir, being forced to abandon their possessions in Ulster, as we have already observed, and take refuge in Munster. Her generals and captains she reminds of the loss of a father, a brother, or a son, in the former wars; that now the occasions for ample revenge offered, which she doubted not, but that they would gladly embrace, and thus gratify their private, at the same time that they did the public resentment. So animating a speech delivered by any one, but especially by a fine woman, who spoke from her feelings, could not fail of producing all the effects she wished. A considerable force is soon levied, and marched into Ulster, under the command of Lugha; of all which proceedings, Connor having timely notice, raised all the power the shortness of the time would allow him to collect, and sent an express to Cuchullain, second in command, at Dun-Dalgan, to head them; but with strict orders not to engage the enemy if possible, till the arrival of Conall, who was daily expected to return from Britain or Gaul.

For six days Cuchullain remained shut up in his camp, notwithstanding all the endeavours of Lugha to force him to a battle; but on the seventh, spurred on by his own personal courage, he rashly engaged them, in which battle he fell by the sword of Lugha, and his army suffered a complete defeat. The plain on which this bloody battle was fought, was called Muirtheimhne, in the county of Lowth; and the relation of it, has for title Bruilíoch-more-Mhuirtheimhne, or the Great Defeat at Muirtheimhne. Whilst we admire the style and spirit with which this work is wrote, we are a good deal distressed at the superstition and credulity,

dulity, which must have then prevailed. We read of the Cear-daibh na Druadh, or Druid exorcisms of magic spells, and Cear-Dreachd, or Druid divinations, all uniting with the Heremicians to destroy the redoubtable Cuchullain and his army! In this battle we find war-chariots were used, and numbers of them destroyed in the conflict, which was very bloody. Not only in the history of this, but of all the other wars antecedent to Christianity, we see the incantations, magic, and spells of the Druids introduced, and scarce a battle gained without their assistance. From this recital, what shall we think of the candour of Mac Pheron *, who boldly affirms, that in all the relations of the early bards, not the least mention of religious ceremony is to be found! shall we affirm, that these are his own suggestions, not the dictates of truth; and shall we apply to him, what the great Usher says of his countryman and fellow-labourer Dempster?—"Tam suspectæ fidei hominem illum fuisse com-
 "perimus, & toties tesseram fregisse, ut oculatos nos esse oporteat, & nisi quod videmus, nihil ab eo acceptum credere †."

Scarce were these battles fought, when new misfortunes afforded fresh fuel to the flames of war. The beautiful Deirdre, daughter to Feidhlim, the son of Doill, who was first minister to the king of Ulster, was educated in the palace of Emania; and amongst the numbers of illustrious youth, companions of the Craobh-Ruadh, who attended the court, were the three sons of Uisneach, whose names were Naois, Ainle, and Ardan. We may judge of the personal accomplishments of the first of them, who loved, and was beloved by Deirdre, by the strong terms in which she expressed them. Attended by her confidant on a snowy day, she beheld a butcher at a distance killing a calf, and some time after, a raven come to feed on the blood. The whole wo-

* Fingal and Temora.

† Primord. Eccles. Brit. p. 379.

man absorbed in love, turns to her governess ; “ Behold, says she, the
 “ whiteness of that snow, such is the skin of my hero ! his cheeks
 “ are more blooming than the blood scattered round it ; and his
 “ hair is smoother and blacker than the feathers of the raven that
 “ feeds on it !” Metaphors inexpressibly bold and strong ! After
 such declaration, we may judge it did not require much impor-
 tunity to prevail upon her to elope with her paramour. But
 to carry off a lady from court, under the protection of the king
 and queen, was not only in itself dangerous, but even deemed
 a sacrilege. But what action is not love capable of inspiring ?
 The infatuated Naois, unbosomed himself to his brethren, who
 agreed to assist him in carrying off the prize, or to perish in the
 attempt. A ship was provided on the coast, and 150 select
 soldiers, men of approved valour, and friends to the family, were
 employed on this service. So well did they execute their orders,
 that scarcely was this outrage known to Connor, when they had
 embarked for Albany. But such was his influence at the Pictish
 court, that the fugitives were soon obliged to take to their ships,
 and with difficulty escaped. Finding little protection abroad,
 they, through the mediation of friends, implored their pardon.
 Connor seemed at length to relent ; and to prove the sincerity of
 his intentions, he delivered to the friends of the young knights
 his natural son, Cormoc Conloingios, and his cousin Feargus, as
 hostages for their safety.

On these securities Naois and his followers landed ; and by
 way of doing them honour, than which nothing less was intended,
 Connor sent Eogan, an officer in whom he placed the highest
 confidence, with a proper guard, to conduct them to court. But
 his private instructions were, at a convenient opportunity, to cut
 off the whole party ; and so well did this commander discharge
 his trust, that not one of them escaped ; even Fiachadh, son of
 Feargus, one of the hostages who was of their party, was not
 spared.

spared. So flagrant a violation of public faith excited general indignation, and the very hostages thought themselves so basely used, that they raised a considerable body of troops, with which they suddenly attacked the palace of Emania, plundered it of its most valuable effects, and put to the sword all they met, not sparing even the ladies ! But this outrage was soon chastised by Connor ; and they fled for protection to Conaught, where they were received with open arms. The war became now more acrimonious and bloody ; and in one of the many actions fought on this occasion, Olioll, king of Conaught, fell by the sword of Conall-Cearnach ; who, in his retreat, was so closely pursued by the Conacians, that his intrepid soul could see no alternative, but in victory or in death. His resolution being fixed, in a short speech he animated his soldiers ; and though very unequal for the combat, they undauntedly began the attack, but were punished for their temerity, being all cut off to a man.

The death of so many heroes, depressed the courage of the Ultonians in proportion as it elevated that of their antagonists. In this dilemma Forbhuidhe, son and Righ-Damhna or presumptive heir to Connor, formed the resolution of cutting off the queen of Conaught : at any time detestable, but in these days of chivalry infinitely more so. Meibhe, advanced in years, after the death of her paramour Feargus, and her husband Olioll, retired to Inis-Clothron, near Loch-Ribh, where she lived more retired. It was her custom, on summer mornings, to bathe herself in that fine lake, of which Forbhuidhe was well informed. He caused the length and breadth of the lake to be measured, and particularly to the place where she bathed. Thus instructed, he fixed up a mark near Emania, and with his Cran-Tubal, or sling, he constantly practised at it every day, till he became almost certain of hitting it with a ball, as often as he pleased. At this time, a convention was proposed between the rival powers, who met
at

at Loch-Ribh; and this the infamous Forbhuidhe thought would afford him an unsuspected opportunity of executing his infernal scheme. Accordingly he took his stand one morning, and just as the queen was plunging into the water, he darted a ball with such force and direction, as to hit her on the skull, which immediately depriving her of sense, she sunk to the bottom, to rise no more!

This most base action, though in its effects so happy, by restoring peace to the nation, we can hardly suppose to be carried on without the consent, if not advice, of Connor, who we have seen violated himself, in the most flagrant manner, public faith, by the murder of the sons of Uisneach. Remote as we are from these scenes of action, we can only judge from events; but had we been better acquainted with their real motives, they would not perhaps appear in so detestable a light as they now do. For Connor was undoubtedly a prince of great abilities, as well as uncommon intrepidity; otherwise he could not so manfully, as we see he did for years, oppose the whole power of the monarch and his allies, aided by a considerable party in his own territories. He was besides a great protector of arts and sciences; to him we are in a great measure indebted for what records and history we possess of these remote days. For the power and insolence of the bards, and of the literati, had at this time rose to so high a pitch, that scarce any thing they demanded durst be refused them. Protected in their persons and possessions by the laws, they abused this trust in the most flagrant manner, by libelling whoever disoblged them. Besides their colleges and munificent foundations, like modern mendicants they were perpetually craving one favour or other, till their vast properties, their immunities, and the numbers of their followers—such as Cæsar * tells us,

* Comment. lib. vi.

was AT THIS VERY TIME the case with Gaul—became alarming to the state.

But most reformatations are carried on with more zeal than prudence, with more violence than good sense! Such was the general resentment against this body of men, that instead of distinguishing between the use and abuse of them, by a national decree of the estates at Cruachan, they were deprived of their immunities, and banished the kingdom. In this humiliating state they found a generous protection in Ulster; and Connor, though waging war for ten years with the Heremonians, yet forgot not what he owed to his country, and to the fine arts. A thousand Ollamhs, or doctors in sciences, did he support and protect for seven years; and when peace became restored, and the voice of sense and prudence could be distinguished from those of faction and oppression, he clearly shewed, that the total abolition of the *literary orders* would be to the last degree detrimental to the state; but that a proper restraint laid on them would be a most useful and necessary step. The number of Ollamhs, or doctors, was therefore, as in the days of Ollamh-Fodhla, reduced to 200; and proper care taken to prevent idlers listing under their auspices as heretofore.

This monarch, Eochaidh, is distinguished in our histories by the epithet Aremh, or of the Grave, because he first regulated the different modes of interment. He directed that the head should be placed to the West, the feet to the East, and a Leacht, or monument of stone, raised over the whole *. Some of the knights had graves dug; the bottom of smooth marble, the sides built with brick and cement, in the form of a modern coffin, and so finished at top, that a large stone so exactly fitted it as to leave no room for dust, or adventitious substances. In this the corpse was laid,

* Tri bhiorghaoithe an bhas, l. iii. halt 8.

with his armour on him, and a sword by his side. Inscriptions were raised round the moulding of the coffins, and the beauty of the letters proclaim at this day the skill of the sculptors. Many such are to be seen, and particularly at Ard-Feart, or the Lofty Burial-place, in the county of Kerry. Foreigners of distinction had always Leachts, or monuments of stone, raised for them, as we learn, by a very ancient Rann, or verse; and whoever died by the sword, was sure to have a Leacht, or indeed rather a Carn, raised to him, according to the maxims of Pythagoras, who was himself a Druid. “Locus lapidibus obruendus, “ubi sanguis humanus sparsus est.” In the famous battle of Muirtheimhne, already mentioned, on Cuchullain’s being mortally wounded, he directs his charioteer—“to carry him to yonder “Carruig, (a large stone pitched on one end), to place his “body standing against it, his sword in his hand, his shield “raised up, and his two spears by his left side.” He was completely armed, as this work tells us. In the Leabhar-Lecan, book iii. we are told, that when the Catha Miligh, or hero Mar, the son of Rignet, was slain in the battle of Findebhra, the son of Mac Con, caused a Carn-Cloch, or monument of the most precious stones in Callruidhe, to be raised over him. The renowned hero Eogan, slain in the battle of Lena, was laid out completely armed, in the same manner; and over him a Carn, or heaps of stone were raised. The following verse, in the history of this battle of Lena, shews Eogan “placed erect, his lance “by his shoulder, his helmet on his head, his coat of mail on his “body, and his sword in his hand.”

Feart *Mhogha-Neid*, ar mhoige tualang

Gona *Ruibhne* re a ghualin.

Gona *luirig* luaghios goil;

Is gona *Chathbhar*, cumh doid.

The

The ancient ceremonies observed in interring the great were thus. When the corpse was laid in its vault, or appointed burial-place, the Druids performed all the solemn rites prescribed by their religion: the chief Senachie or antiquarian, then recited aloud the pedigree of the deceased, till he came to its first source. The Ard-Fhileadh, or chief poet, in a species of poetry called Caoine, or lamentations, used only on such occasions, proclaimed his virtues, his bravery, his hospitality, and how well he supported the honour of his race; this was succeeded by a great cry, when every one passing by the grave, threw a stone over it, hence the old saying, of having performed all duties to a departed friend—*Do rineadh a Loi, agas a Leacht*—i. e. they recited his apotheosis, and raised his monument. This custom the early Greeks borrowed from our ancestors; but their successors forgetting the original institution, instead of rendering to the deceased the praises justly due to them, often deified them; and from them the Romans borrowed the same most absurd and most disgraceful custom. That all the Scythic tribes detested this most infamous and unmanly adulation, we are furnished with a striking example in king Attila, king of the Huns. Marullus, a Calabrian poet, waited on him with a copy of verses; but as soon as the prince understood that he derived his pedigree from the gods, he would have killed him, but for the respect due to his order. The reader will plainly see, that this custom in Ireland was established for the wisest and best of purposes. At these funerals all the family and friends of the deceased attended: it was deemed an indispensable duty; and it is still observed by the remains of old families, but wisely omitted by many of our modern ones. The praises of the deceased were the strongest incitements to virtue, courage, and hospitality in their survivors.

As Ælian remarks, “Celtæ hymnorum fuorum argumentum
“faciunt viros qui in præliis fortiter pugnantes, occubuerunt.”

Connor, king of Ulster, of whom so much as been said, was the son of Fatchna, the son of Cais, son to Ruighridhe the Great, of the house of Ir. Pursuing the Conacians commanded by Ceat, with too much impetuosity, he received a violent fracture on the skull by a ball, darted from a Cran-Tubal, or sling, and of which wound he recovered by the operation of the trepan, performed by his chief surgeon, Fighnin, called Feathach, or the Skillful. This is not the only testimony our history bears, of the eminence of our ancient physicians and surgeons. In the bloody battle of Criona, fought in the beginning of the third century, Teige, the son of Cein, the son of Oilioll, of the house of Heber, being deeply wounded, and the barbs of some spears lodged in different parts of his body, producing exquisite pain, he sent to Munster for the celebrated surgeon Finighn, called Feath-glic, or the Learned and Dextrous, who with his three Daltadh, or élèves, soon relieved him, by removing these extraneous bodies *. It appears, that physic, like the other learned professions, was hereditary in families; and that the most celebrated of this body attended the army. So much superior in knowledge to the rest of their brethren, were these military surgeons deemed, that to this day, to express an incurable, we say “Ni thogfiodh leagha na bhfionn, e!—the physicians of the
“royal militia would not raise him!”

3965 Eidersgeoil, after violent struggles, was by all parties proclaimed monarch of Ireland. He was the son of O’Hiar, called in the Leabhar-Lecan, king of Munster, the son of the exiled Deaghadh, of the line of Heremon. He was a prince of great

* Leabhar-Lecan, lib. iii.

talents, and of a very enterprising disposition. Early in life he lead a select body of troops into Ulster, in revenge for the expulsion of his ancestors from thence, by the house of Ir. In marching through Meath, he met with the beautiful Meafbuchuail, the daughter of Eassa, daughter to the then reigning monarch Eochaidh *, by whom he had his son Conaire. This prince fell by the sword of his successor.

Nuadha-Neacht, a descendant of Criomthan-Cosgrach, of the line of Heremon, did not long enjoy the monarchy, his army being defeated, and himself slain in the battle of Cliach, by the son of his predecessor, in the sixth month of his reign. 3970

* Leabhar-Lecan, lib. iii. O'Flaherty, &c.

BOOK

B O O K V.

C H A P. I.

Antiquity of chivalry in Europe—utility of Irish history in such enquiry—five equestrian orders in Ireland—knights, a particular order in the state—their education and elevated sentiments—Cæsar and Pausanias justified, and the customs of knighthood, in subsequent times, on the continent explained.

HAVING so frequently mentioned the knights of ancient Ireland, the curious reader will, no doubt, wish to be more fully informed of the nature of this order of men, so celebrated in our history. He will be the more desirous of this information, as most modern writers make the institution of chivalry in Europe of a much later date : some deriving it from the Moors of Granada, others from the Croisades ; but all agreeing that it must have originated after the destruction of the Roman empire. Yet Cæsar * assures us, that the second order amongst the Gauls, were the Equites, or knights ; and sure a better authority there cannot be. Livy, in his history, in more places than one, mentions them ; describes the dress of one or two of them, and particularly notes the Torques, or gold breast-plate, pendulous

* Commentar. lib. vi.

from

from the neck. Pausanias * describes them and their chariots; and he tells us, that they were called Trimarkisian, from their chariots being drawn by three horses; for, says he, “the name of a horse amongst the Gauls, is known to be Markan.”
 Καὶ τὸ ὄνομα ἴσως τῆς ΜΑΡΚΑΝ ὃν ὑπο τῶν ΚΕΑΤΩΝ.

Unfortunately for letters, the early histories of the Gauls and Britons, and indeed of every other nation subdued by the Romans, are lost; these last shewing themselves every where, as much the enemies of science as of the liberties of mankind. Therefore, destitute of proper guides, later writers, suppose the origin of chivalry in Europe to have commenced at, or very near the time, in which they first find any mention of it by Celtic writers! For it is a point agreed on †, that they took not their rise from the knights of ancient Rome. Ireland, however, being free from any attempt of the Romans, preserved her ancient history; and it is the more valuable, as it plainly appears to be the ONLY key to the laws and customs of the ancient Celtæ, as handed down to us by Greek and Roman writers. So extremely ancient has the institution of chivalry been amongst us, that we scarce know where to trace its origin. We find our ancestors had it in Greece; and the Curetes, or knights amongst the first reformers of Greece, are mentioned with particular honour, and such is to this day, the name of a knight in Irish. Probably it originated in Egypt, from whence they brought it first to Crete. Certain it is, that from the foundation of the Milesian monarchy, this order of men have been particularly attended to, and their rank, their dress, and their insignia determined.

There were five equestrian orders in Ireland — the first was the Niagh-Nase, or knights of the Golden Collar; and this order was peculiar to the blood royal, as without it, no prince could

* In Phocic.

† Selden's Titles of Honour.

presume to become candidate for the monarchy. Of the truth of this we are furnished with a striking instance in the fourth century. Whilst the different competitors were putting in their claims for the monarchy, Eochaidh, king of Leinster, aspiring to the same honour, seized on the palace of Tara during the election, hoping by this means to strengthen his claim; but upon the remonstrances of the Druids and lawyers of his own court, who represented to him how criminal his behaviour must appear to the whole kingdom, to say that he should presume taking possession of Tara, much less to become a candidate for the monarchy, who had not yet received the *Gradh-Gaisge*, or order of chivalry! he relinquished his claim, and surrendered the imperial palace to Nial, surnamed the Grand.

Of the other orders of chivalry, the *Curaithe na Craobh-ruadh*, or knights of Ulster, for number, prowess, and discipline, seem to rank foremost in our history. Why they have been always distinguished by the name of *Craobh-ruadh*, or of the Red Branch, is not said. Should we suppose it alluded to the arms of Ulster, which are, "Luna, a hand sinister, couped at the wrist, Mars." Then should they be called *Crobh-ruadh*, or of the Bloody Hand, which perhaps was their real title. The *Clana-Deagha*, or Munster knights, were a most intrepid order of men. This name they took from Deagha, who was expelled Ulster about A. M. 3920, and new marshalled this body. For I can by no means admit, that he was the founder of them, or that Baoisgne instituted such an order in Leinster; as we know, that this class of people always flourished amongst us. Daire, the son of Deagha, succeeded his father in the command of these knights; and as from the father they were called *Clana-Deagha*, so from the son they in particular were called *Righ-Daire*, or heroes formed by the arm of Daire, *Righ*, being Irish for an arm! Through the protection of Duach, and the intrepidity of these knights, Deagha, from an exile,

exile, became king of Munster, in exclusion of the Heberian or true line; and it is on this account, that these knights bore for their ensign the arms of Munster, i. e. "Saturn, a king enthroned in majesty." The Leinster knights were called Clana-Baoisgne, from Baoisgne, an ancestor of the celebrated Fion, who reformed and gave new laws to them. Their ensign was the same of the same province, i. e. "Jupiter, an harp, Sol, stringed Luna." The knights of Conaught, in these early days, were of the Danaan race, and yielded not the palm, in point of courage and discipline, to any heroes in Europe. Their arms were, "Jupiter, a cavalier completely armed;" for such I take for granted to be the insignia of Conaught, being the reverse of the coins of Roderic and Turelogh O'Connor, the two last monarchs of Ireland, when kings of Conaught *only*.

The rank the knights supported in the state was very early settled; for they preceded all other classes of people, giving way to none but the Ollamhs, or doctors in different sciences, and to the blood royal. By the law called Ilbreachta, or of colours, established A. M. 2820, knights were allowed five colours in their garments. Eadhna, A. M. 2996, decreed them silver shields and targets, and the privilege of fighting in chariots, *before this* reserved to the princes or generals only. Soon after this, Muinheamhoin decreed, that knights for the future should wear a Torques, or collar of gold, pendulous from the neck; and this last both Strabo and Livy declare was constantly worn by the Gaulish knights. This collar was used long after the Norman invasion, and the wearer was called Fleasgach, from Fleasg, a torques; but these invaders wishing to abolish all ancient customs, so far ridiculed this, that the name though so honourable in itself, became in time, an epithet of contempt and derision.

Not only their rank was ascertained, but the utmost care taken of their education, and of their military rules. Academies, at the national expence, were founded for them (like the royal

military school of Paris) at Tara, Emania, Cashell, Cruachan, Naas, &c. The candidate was entered at seven years old, when a slender lance was put in his hand, and a sword by his side. From this to fourteen, they were instructed in letters, and in military discipline, when they took their first vows. They were now exercised every day, in casting a javelin at a mark, at which in time they became so expert, as to be certain of transfixing an enemy with it, when within its force. The Cran-Tubal, or sling, was another instrument very much used in ancient times, from which they darted balls with great force and direction. At the use of the sword and target they were uncommonly skilful; and they fought on foot, on horseback, or in chariots, according to their situation and circumstances.

At eighteen they took their last vows; and from the accounts of this order of men, *STILL* pretty well preserved, we are surprised how elevated their sentiments were, and their ideas of honour and heroism. To swear by their knighthood, was the most sacred oath, as it at once reminded them of all their vows. In the battle of Ventry, in Kerry, called Catha Fiontragha, one of the knights in Fion's army says—"Luigheamfi fam bhriathar, agas fam Aramaibh-*Gaisge*—i. e. I affirm on my word, and on the arms of chivalry, &c."

At the battle of Muirtheimhne, fought before the Incarnation, when Cuchullain is opposed by his officers, from fighting the imperial army, he at length cries out, "Since the days that my first arms were put into my hands, (i. e. since I received the honour of knighthood) I have not declined a battle, nor shall I this." Their common saying was—"Is fear blath na Seaghail—i. e. Glory is preferable to life." When Conall, general of the knights of Ulster, flew in battle Misgeadhra, a celebrated Conacian hero, not satisfied with this, he singly attacks Ceat, the Conaught general; but though in this last action he
flew

flew also his antagonist, yet he purchased victory at a very dear rate, being desperately wounded, and left on the field of battle for dead. In this situation he was found by Belchu, of Breifni, another Conaught knight, who could not forbear insulting Conall in his distresses, accusing him of being the cause of the torrents of blood then shed in Ireland. The afflicted knight upbraids Belchu of baseness and cowardice, in thus insulting an enemy, unable to revenge himself; telling him, he would act a more generous part in killing him outright, as then he would have the glory in dying, to have it told, that three knights of Conaught were at once engaged in killing him. Belchu, stung by these reproofs, told him, he scorned so base an act; and had him brought to his own house to be taken proper care of, when on his recovery, he engaged to fight him.

In the bloody battle of Maigh-Lena, in the King's county, fought in the second century, It was proposed by some officers in the imperial army, to attack the troops of Munster, or indeed rather of Leath-Mogha, at night, by a kind of coup de main; but Gaull, the son of Morni, and chief of the knights of Conaught, made this heroic answer—"On the day that I received the honour of knighthood, I vowed never to attack an enemy at night, by surprize, or under any kind of disadvantage*!" In the third century, Mac Con, an exile, invades Ireland; but instead of immediately attacking his enemy, as yet unprepared, he sends his ambassadors to Art, the then monarch, notifying his arrival and his intentions. Their demands and his answer are worth reciting. "We come (said they) from Mac Con, to you Art Mac-Cuin, requiring you in his name, to divide Ireland with him, or to meet him on the plains of Moicruimhe, where he will wait for you, with thirty battalions." "I will never

* Iounfuidhe Magha-Leana.

“ consent to divide the kingdom (replies Art), nor will I decline
 “ the battle. He is unworthy a crown who declines the fight.
 “ My father waded to the monarchy through torrents of blood,
 “ and the sword only shall deprive me of it !” The next question
 was, as to the time of fighting. Art demanded twelve months,
 to enable his allies to join him. But the numbers of foreigners
 in the army of Mac Con made it impossible to grant this request.
 By mutual agreement it was fought in a fortnight; and a most
 bloody and decisive battle it proved ! for in it fell Art, by the
 sword of Mac Con; the king of Conaught, by that of Beine-
 Briot, prince of Wales; seven sons of the king of Munster, and
 many heroes of prime note, fell that day, as is particularly re-
 lated in the history of this war *.

The mode of chivalry in Ireland was as follows: in every
 military academy, before the great court, a coat of mail and a
 shield were suspended under an handsome arch, to denote them
 always ready for battle. At all public festivals, and particularly
 when the young knights took their last vows, numbers repaired
 to be witnesses of the ceremony. Such foreign knights as chose to
 enter the lists, struck the shield three times with their launces, when
 each cried out “ fgreadaim fgiath, and farim comhpach, i. e. I
 “ strike the shield, and demand the fight.” Their names, quality,
 and proofs of knighthood were then demanded, and the terms of
 the tournament adjusted. From this old custom comes the com-
 mon saying, *even at this day*, of calling a riotous and quarrel-
 some person, a Buillim fgiath, i. e. a Shield-beater.

Thus we see to demonstration, that Cæsar, Pausanias, and Ta-
 citus, were right when they mentioned the equestrian order
 amongst the Gauls and Germans; and we may venture to affirm,
 that from us, both they and the Britons borrowed the custom:

* Catha Maigh-Muicruimhe

for the Trimarkisian of Pausanias, is radical Irish, denoting three horses. It is true the word Marc, for a horse, is not now used by us, but it is seen in our compounds; thus Marcach, signifies an horseman; Marc-Sluagh, cavalry; Luath-Mharc, a race horse, &c. Cæsar says the equites in Gaul ranked next the literati; and we see the same in Ireland. The Germans call a knight Ritter, and we call him Ridaire. But to prove that the Irish did not borrow this custom from other nations, we are furnished with a striking anecdote. When Richard II. in 1395, made a royal tour to Ireland, he was met in Dublin by the four provincial kings, whom he intended knighting; but they declined this compliment, each having received that honour from his father, at seven years old *. In Germany about the ninth and tenth centuries, (and most probably earlier) we see orders of knighthood conferred by the emperors of Germany; and such of themselves as had not received this honour before, accept of it from the hands of some prelate. Henry III. was knighted by the archbishop of Bremen. In 1247, the earl of Holland, intended king of the Romans, was first knighted; and Louis XI. of France, just before his coronation, received this honour from the hands of Philip duke of Bourgogne †. As then it is a point agreed upon, that orders of chivalry in Europe originated not from the Romans; and though the contrary had been asserted, yet we see clearly from Cæsar and Tacitus, that they existed amongst them long before the Romans became acquainted with them; where can we trace their rise but in Ireland? If the German emperors and French monarchs found it necessary to be knighted previous to their coronation, in the middle ages; are we not struck with the case of Eochaidh, king of Leinster, in the fourth century, who, as we have shewn, was obliged to relinquish

* Froissard. Selden's Titles of Honour, &c.

† Selden.

his claim to the Irish monarchy, not being previously knighted. There are still more reasons to support my assertion. Our histories of chivalry, yet well preserved, tell us, that the knights of Ireland, in very early days, frequently traversed the continent, where they gained glory and honour; and so celebrated were they in Europe, as to be called, by way of pre-eminence, the HEROES OF THE WESTERN ISLE! Add to this, what Llhuid * has long since demonstrated, i. e. that the names of the principal commanders, who opposed Cæsar in Gaul and Britain, are pure Irish, latinized! Shall we conjecture, that some of our knights headed and disciplined these troops? I own, I have no doubt of it. Can we suppose that those, whom we have seen so manfully assist both the Carthaginians and Gauls, in their invasions of the Roman empire, would remain idle spectators, when these Romans were coming so near their own home? they undoubtedly would not! We have observed that Labhra, in A. M. 3652, acquired a principality in Gaul; and I do suspect that Ambiorix, king of the Eburones, so inimical to Cæsar, was an Irishman, and these Eburones, the Heberian or Irish colony. For Ambiorix, I derive from Ambas-orereic, i. e. a renowned hero; as I do Cassilbillanus, who so manfully opposed Cæsar, on his second landing in Britain, and particularly when fording the Thames, from Cassil, a fortification, Bille, a billet of wood, and Aun, water. For Cæsar tells us, that, to retard this passage, Cassilbillanus caused billets of wood to be sunk in the water, charged with iron spikes.

* Archæologia.

C H A P. II.

Of the literary order, and their rank and privileges in the state—the duties of the bards similar to what was in later periods adopted on the continent—obliged to attend their chiefs to battle—the customs of the Huns, and other Scythic states, in these matters, similar to those of the Irish.

THE literati making so conspicuous a figure in our history, I conceive that to give a clearer idea of the nature and power of this body of men, will greatly elucidate our annals. The Irish constitution, from the beginning, seemed founded on a very extensive plan, as well for war as letters—tam marte, quam Minervâ; and, singular to be told, each promoted the other. The whole body of the literati had but one chief, and he was the Arch-Druid. As this was a place of the highest trust, it was conferred on some branch of the blood royal only. We see it the case with our great ancestor Niulus himself, and with most of his successors, as it was the custom both at Sydon and Tyre. This body of men were exempt from all civil jurisdiction, and acknowledged no power but that of the Arch-Druid, and his delegates. Large estates were settled on them, and on their posterity (for all employments were hereditary); and their persons and properties were inviolable. Whoever became protected by the literary order, feared not the ravages and devastations in intestine commotions; for it was sacrilege to molest them. If the Senachie in his history, or the Bard in his ode, passed the Rubicon of truth, to his *order* only was the injured party to complain,

complain, though it were even the monarch himself, and by their tribunal only was he to be judged! Possessed of such power, and such privileges, can we be surprised if we read of their being sometimes alarming to the states; and that measures should be taken, from time to time, to circumscribe their power and influence?

The duties of the Ard-Fhileadh, or Chief Bard, was to celebrate in verse the achievements of his chief, and of his house. He made birth-day odes, and wept over the manes of the illustrious dead. Did he immortalize any other hero? one verse at least was sacred to his own tribe. He was particularly interdicted satire and misrepresentation, and proper amercements awaited the violating this law. When we read this account, and compare it with the precepts issued forth when doctors in poetry were first instituted on the continent, but particularly in Germany *, we are astonished to see how exactly the laws in the last place coincide with these in the first. The poems were set to music, and a large company were always assembled on these occasions. We find by Marcellinus, that the bards on the continent always sung their odes to the modulations of the harp †; and how much the Irish excelled all other nations in composition and execution in music, I have but to refer to the confession of Cambrensis ‡, who certainly must have been acquainted with the best masters in this science, either in Britain or Gaul in his days. He nevertheless owns, that the Irish excelled all other nations in this accomplishment; and Polydore Virgil, a writer of the sixteenth age, declares—"Hiberni sunt musicæ peritissimi!"

In early days, all the sciences were conveyed in verse; and in the BARD was comprehended the historian, the judge, the poet,

* Acta Cæsar. Argent. Selden's Titles of Honour, &c.

† Lib. v.

‡ Topograph. vi. 11.

and philosopher, according to a very old Rann or verse, on Amergin, brother to Heber, the first monarch of Ireland, and who was himself Arch-Druid. It has been thus latinized by Mr. O'Flaherty.

“ Primus *Amerginus*-Genu-Candidus, author Ierne :

“ Historicus, index lege, poeta, sopherus.”

The same custom the early Greeks adopted, and Orpheus, Amphion, Linus, and Musæus, united under the same heads the poet, the legislator, and philosopher *. Thales, the Cretan legislator, conveyed his precepts in verse, and sung them to his lyre † ; but in process of time, these sciences were found too complex for one man. The study of the laws was therefore confined to certain families, as were those of history, divinity, philosophy, and poetry. But besides the above recited duties of the bard, the Irish ones had another duty imposed on them, nowhere else to be found. It was to attend their patrons to the field of battle ; to animate them in the height of the engagement, by their verse, and by their music, and to bear witness to their exploits, and to their success.

The ode composed on this occasion was called Rosg-Catha, or the Eye of Battle, as being recited in the midst of slaughter. Numbers of these odes are yet preserved, many of which are in my possession. They are beautiful ; to the last degree animating ; and seem evidently, by the measure, to have been set to martial music. We are amazed at the elevation of style, dignity of expression, and boldness of the metaphors in them. One of these, addressed by the poet Feargus, the son of Finn, to Gaull Mac Morni, at the battle of Cnucha, in which the famous Cuinhal fell by the sword of this hero, begins thus—“ Gaull vigorous and

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* Plato de Republ. lib. ii.

† Strabo Geograph. lib. x.

“warlike: chief of the intrepid. Unboundedly generous: the
 “delight of majesty. A wall of unextinguished fire: rage un-
 “remitting. A champion replete with battles; directing the
 “rage of heroes.” But in the midst of all this fire, the bard
 does not forget his own particular interest. In another stanza, he
 addresses himself to Gaul thus—“ Lover of constant desolation:
 “son of the great Morna. Generous to poets: respite to war-
 “riors. A tribute on nations: the downfall of foreigners.”
 This poor literal attempt at translation, falls infinitely short of
 the original, which I have here inserted.

“Goll mear Mileata: Ceap na Crodhachta.

“Laimh fhial arrachta: mian na Mordhachta.

“Mur lein lan teinne: Fraoch nach bhfuarthear

“Laoch go lan ndeabhna: reim an readh Churraibh.”

“Scearc na fíor fhoghla: mac mear mor *Mhorna*.

“*Fial re Filidhaibh*: fgis ar Curradhuibh.

“Cios ar Chineadhuibh: dith ar Danaraibh.”

In what great reverence this great order of men were held,
 and how sacred their persons, even in the midst of slaughter,
 may be collected by the following anecdote, recorded in the
 Leabhar-Lecan, and taken from the Book of Leinster. In the
 fourth century, Eochaidh the monarch was defeated by Eana,
 king of Leinster, at the battle of Cruachan. In this battle Eana
 killed Cetmathach, poet laureat to the monarch, “although
 “(says my author) he fled for refuge under the shields of the
 “Leinster troops.” For this foul action he got the epithet of
 Cinfealach, and which name descended to his posterity: it de-
 notes, the foul or reproachful head. If this had not been
 deemed an unexampled instance of barbarity, no doubt it would
 not

not be transmitted to posterity, in the manner we see it. What power the poet had over his auditory, in those days of heroism, we may collect from the following. When the famous Attila, king of the Huns, and who was called the Scourge of God, admitted Leo I. and his retinue into his presence; after entertaining them nobly, two Scythian bards were admitted, and advancing towards Attila, they recited a poem in which his military achievements, and those of his followers were celebrated. The Huns were in raptures, some exulting with joy, at the remembrance of their former exploits; others lamenting their inabilities to gain fresh laurels; but all affected beyond description. We see his humanity equal to his bravery, by granting that peace to the request of this prelate, which all the powers of Italy could not procure from him. The life of this prince furnishes us with a striking instance of his great good sense and moderation, and how much the Scythic nations detested fulsome adulation. After laying waste a considerable part of Italy, he was presented with a copy of verses by Marullus, a Calabrian poet; but when he understood that this contemptible parasite attempted to derive his pedigree from the gods; and even, after the *polite* Roman manner, to deify himself, he lost all patience; commanded the poem to be burnt, and would have made him undergo the same fate, but for the reverence in which he held the poetic tribe.

C H A P. III.

Of Conaire the Grand—mistakes in the genealogy of this house corrected, and the national annals defended—its different branches pointed out—imposes a tribute on the people of Leinster—his other acts to his death—of Lughaidh, Connor, and Criomthan, his successors.

PERSUADED that the curious reader will be far from considering the two last chapters as digressions from my subject, I again resume the historic part.

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Conaire, by the defeat and death of Nuadha, was proclaimed monarch. He was the son of Edeirsgoil, of the Erenochs of Munster, a branch of the royal line of Heremon, from whom the Dalriada of Scotland, and of course his present majesty are descended. In our annals he is called More, or the Great; and in the Book of Reigns, Conaire na N'or Sgiath, or Conaire of the Golden Shield, as he used none other in battle.

The generations allowed from Fiacha, the son of Aongus, to this prince, are certainly too many; but a certain modern writer, instead of labouring to explain or correct this mistake, boldly advances from it, that the whole of our early history is bardish invention! An assertion so rash and inconsiderate merits no serious animadversion; since, if it were to have any weight, we must at the same time give up as a fable, the early histories of all the nations in the world, not even excepting the Jews! It is to be remembered that Aongus had acquired, for his son Fiacha, large possessions in Ulster; and there it was that Olioll, the son of Fiacha settled, and from those lands was he surnamed Aron. Later writers

writers have not with precision attended to the differences between the Irish Righ, and Airrigh; the first denoting a king in the full meaning of the word, the other a feudatory prince. What number of children Olioll had, we are not told. It is more than probable that he had a good many, each of which retained the title of Airrigh. This, it is to be presumed, was again the case of his eldest son and successor, Suin. Deaghadh was driven out of these possessions of his ancestors, and so highly protected in Munster by Duach, as to succeed him to that crown. In a considerable time after, the successors of this Deaghadh were expelled Munster by force of arms, and at length settled in North Britain.

Now though these undoubtedly had their bards and antiquarians, as well as the other great families; and that we know to a certainty, that the celebrated poet Forchern, who wrote the Rules for Poetry, and Tracts upon the Laws, was the antiquarian of Conraoi, nephew to Hiar, and grandson of Deaghadh; yet succeeding bards, not distinguishing between the words Righ, and Airrigh, made of the different children of each prince so many kings, and by this means unnecessarily multiplied the generations. Thus Deaghadh, the fourth in descent from Aongus, who reigned monarch of Ireland from A. M. 2778 to 2808, is in some genealogies made eleven generations from him, though the distance between the death of Aongus, and the reception of Deaghadh in Munster is but 108 years! Again, Edeirfgeoil, who was the grandson of Deaghadh, and constantly called Mac ui Jar, or the son of O'Hiar, is placed as great grandson to this O'Hiar, the son of Deaghadh! The same, or very near the same degree of inaccuracy we experience in the genealogy of the house of Ir, before the birth of Christ. The power of this last house, was nearly annihilated in the fourth century, as was that of the Clana Deaghadh a little earlier. Are we to expect then, that their genealogies

nealogies should be preserved with the same accuracy as the Heberian and Heremonian lines, who may be said to exist even at this day? surely not!

It is recorded in the Book of Munster, that in the third century Olioll Flan-more, who succeeded his father in that kingdom, having no issue of his own, left the crown to his brother, on condition that he should be placed in the regal list, not as his brother but as his father. May not the same spirit have actuated other princes (and I am certain it has) to act a similar part, in order to extend the chronology of their different families? And would not such be a much more natural supposition, than to reject entirely one of the best preserved, and the most ancient histories in the world, for a few inaccuracies, and these in the genealogies of one or two families only, whose power ceased soon after the birth of Christ.

The Septuagint translation of the Bible makes Cainan, the father of Sala, and in this it is followed by the evangelist St. Luke, and by St. Augustin; whereas the Hebrew text makes Sala the son, not the grandson, of Arphaxad, and this is supported by the authority of St. Jerome, and by the council of Trent. If then we see this discordance in the four first generations from Noah, shall we be surprised, that a family driven from their first possessions in Ulster, in a couple of centuries after, obliged to retire back to the North again, from their tenures in Munster, and from thence looking for new settlements in North Britain? Shall we, I repeat it, be surprised, that mistakes should rise in their genealogies, and that brothers and contemporaries should be taken for sons and successors, by antiquarians no ways interested in the enquiry?

As this sept has been distinguished from the other branches of the Heremonians, by the names of Ernains, and Deaghades; so the particular race of this Conaire, are sometimes called Siol Conaire,

Conaire, as from a successor of his they are called Dalriada. Another branch are called Dal-Fiatagh; but it is to be noticed, that in the person of Suin this last sept began, he having, besides Degadh, another son called Eocha, who was the ancestor of Fiatagh, from whom this family took the name. The reader will perceive, that I have taken great pains to clear up this part of our history, so honourable to his present majesty, and to the North British Scots.

The first act of Conaire's reign, was an unexampled punishment on the people of Leinster, for the murder of his father. He ordered that every first of November, 300 swords mounted with gold, 300 cows, 300 purple cloaks, and 300 steeds should be delivered in at his palace, as an Eric from that province. From this it becomes evident, that his father was murdered by a party, not killed in battle; since there was no law or precedent to justify this impost otherwise. In revenge for this, we read, soon after of his own palace in Meath's being burnt to the ground, and he himself with difficulty escaping. Barring this, our annals loudly proclaim the uncommon blessings of this reign. We are told, that universal peace and tranquillity became established over the kingdom; that the seasons were uncommonly mild and fertile; and that Ireland had not beheld such Halcyon days! He did not alter the pentarchy established by Eochaidh, except lopping off a considerable tract of land from the province of Leinster, and joining it to that of Munster. This mutilated part extended from Goran to Grein-Airbsin; and Aongus surnamed Aimhas-righ, or of the King's Guard, its inheritor being of his blood, he freed from all future dues to the kings of Munster, except the honour of composing their body-guards. From this the country took the name of Aimhas-righ, commonly called Offory.

But

But though we read of no intestine commotions, yet it is positively asserted by Bruodinus *, hereditary historian of Munster, that this prince for several years carried on a fierce war, both in Britain and Gaul. Hence, from his great success in these expeditions, he was styled Chonaire na Creich, is na Lann, i. e. Conaire of the Tributes and Swords. It is highly probable, that these reiterated attempts were in favour of the discontented in both kingdoms; since Ireland, which had on so many former occasions shewn its dislike of the Roman greatness, must no doubt be highly alarmed to see them such near neighbours; and at what times could these invasions be most successful, but when these Romans were divided amongst themselves? But be this as it may, it is agreed upon, that some malcontents whom he had banished the kingdom, and particularly Haingteil, who had married a British princess, at the head of these, and numbers of Britons, suddenly invaded the kingdom, and marched directly to his palace, which they attacked and put all to the sword, particularly the monarch, who was the principal object of their resentment. From this famous Haingteil, is my worthy and much esteemed friend Richard Anketill, M. D. descended.

The Book of Reigns gives to this prince a rule of seventy years, and which is adopted by Gratian, Lucius, and O'Kennedy †. O'Flaherty admits it to be sixty; and Keating and Bruodinus but thirty. In a constitution conducted as ours then was, a reign of seventy, or even sixty years, for very obvious reasons, seems too long. By admitting him an administration of forty years, we bid fair for reconciling all parties; and if we suppose with many, that the birth of Christ was in the year of the world 4000, it will then appear, that the death of Conaire happened in the tenth year of our Salvation.

* De Regibus Hiberniæ, p. 875. † History of the House of Stuart, p. 84.

The shock the nation felt at the death of this great prince cannot be better expressed, than by observing that so unsettled were the people that it is universally agreed on, that for five years after his decease, no fixed rule of government was adopted! At length Lughaidh, the son of Fineamhnhas, the son of Eochaidh Feidh-lioich, an Heremonian, was by universal consent proclaimed monarch. He had two wives; the first was a Pictish princess; the next, a daughter of Denmark. On the death of this last, he was so afflicted as to fall upon the point of his own sword, and thus dispatched himself. From Clothra, this prince's mother, an island in Loch-Ribh, got the name of Innis-Clothra.

Connor, called Abhra-ruadh, or of the Red Eyebrows, was his successor. He was the son of Feargus named Fairghe, or of the Sea, on account of his large navy, king of Leinster, the son of the monarch Nuadha, another branch of the Heremonian line. His reign lasted little longer than that of his grandfather, being cut off in battle by Criomthan, in the very first year of it.

Criomthan, son to the above Lughadh, ascended the imperial throne. He was surnamed Niagh-nar, or the Hero, on account of his great exploits in war. He also made several successful expeditions into Britain and Gaul, greatly distressing these people most attached to the Romans, and always returning enriched with the spoils of his enemies. This was not all; for, from their manner of fighting, he introduced a new and more perfect discipline amongst his troops; but, in the midst of his mighty projects and great designs, he was killed by a fall from his horse, near his own palace, in the sixteenth year of his reign.

C H A P. IV.

Of the Attachotic war, and the usurpation of Cairbre—Moran refuses the diadem, and brings back the people to their duty—of Fearaidach the Just, and of Moran's famous collar—some passages in Tacitus illustrated—of Fiachadh.

WE have seen Ireland for 1305 years, i. e. from the first landing of the Milesians to the death of Criomthan, governed by a succession of princes, all of the royal blood of Milesius; but the immature death of this last prince enabled a set of conspirators to overturn the constitution, sooner and easier than they expected. As the cause of this revolution has not been satisfactorily explained, we shall endeavour to elucidate it.

In the last book, I noticed the great power and unbounded ambition of the Heremonian line; that they not only obtruded a considerable branch of their house on the Mamonians, but even wrested the crown from, and for a time divided that province with the Heberian or Munster house. The like attempts they made both against Conaught and Ulster; opposing the troops and heroes of each province to the other, in hopes, by weakening each party, to make an easier conquest of the whole. Haingteil, was a Damnonian prince, expelled the province of Conaught by Conaire, and who, as we have seen, amply revenged this injury; and the long confusion that followed the death of that monarch, I persuade myself was owing to the power and influence of these people.

This

This was called the Attachotic, or plebeian war, which Dr. A.C. Keating and Bruodinus place in the reign of Fiacha; but which the Book of Reigns, and from it Grat. Lucius, and O'Flaherty determine to have happened at the present time. The authority of Giolla Caomhain fixes me to this last opinion. The Damnonii plainly seeing their ruin intended, privately league with the Belgæ of Leinster, and, not improbably, with some of the Roman commanders in Britain and Gaul; for the conspiracy was very complex, and for a long time carried on with great secrecy. The princes and nobles of the kingdom being assembled at Tara, to elect a successor to the monarchy; and according to the established mode, public banquets being appointed three days before, and three days after the election, the conspirators thought this the most favourable and least suspected opportunity, of putting their detestable scheme into execution. They accordingly moved 41 off by small parties, so ordered as to assemble at Tara much about the same time. With these Cairbre, called Cean-Cit, or of the Cats-Head, assisted by Monarcha and Buan, two Belgians of quality, suddenly attacked the unsuspecting Milesian chiefs and their followers, whom they made an easy conquest of, putting to the sword all they met with, and then proclaimed Cairbre monarch. The reign of this Damnonian prince lasted but five years; and had its continuance been as sanguinary as its commencement, no doubt the crown might have continued in his family; but we do not read of more bloodshed. There is no doubt but during his reign, as many evidences as could be come at, of Milesian history and chronology, were destroyed; and we must suppose amongst these many works of great value.

On his death, his followers elected his son Moran to succeed him; but he, with an unexampled heroism and constancy refused the crown. Not only this, but so great was his power and influence over these people, and in such animated eloquence did

A.C. he lay before them, the heinousness of their transgressions, and the impossibility of supporting the revolution they had undertaken, that they consented to restore the royal line of Milesius. For though many of the princes of Ireland had been cut off in the above massacre, and others had fled the kingdom, yet the people were every where in arms, attacking the Belgæ and Damnonii wherever to be met, and putting to the sword such as fell into their hands.

46

Fearaidhach, son to the hero Criomthan, was therefore called to the succession by unanimous consent; for every thing was expected from his great wisdom, justice, and firmness. To this prince the rebellious Belgæ swore allegiance, "By the sun, moon, and stars*;" and to his successors of the Milesian line. Through the remonstrances of Moran a general amnesty for past offences was passed; and this truly great man he appointed to the superintendence of the literati, or chief priest, the next place to the monarch, and a post filled by the blood royal only. To him, and to his court, all appeals from inferior courts were made, as well religious as civil.

No prince ever better merited the epithet of Fionfachtnach, or the Most Just, which was by universal consent bestowed on him, than Fearaidhach. The study of his administration was to restore to the laws of the land that force and dignity, which the Attachotic war had deprived them of. From his known clemency and strict regard to his promise, the misled multitude had nothing to fear for what was passed; and his justice and fortitude shewed them what they were to expect from a relapse. In all these great designs so worthy a legislator, he was powerfully seconded by Moran; and mutual confidence, peace, and order became soon restored through the land. "With such a monarch, and such a

* Grat. Luc. p. 67.

“ minister

“ minister at the same time (says the learned Dr. Warner), the A.C.
 “ reader will soon conceive, what must be the happiness of the
 “ people: he will see misrule giving place to harmony, insur-
 “ rection subsiding into tranquillity, and order arising out of con-
 “ fusion. Such was the state of Ireland at the end of the first
 “ plebeian war, AND UNDER SUCH GOVERNORS, IT COULD NOT
 “ BE OTHERWISE *.” So great was the reputation of Moran
 for wisdom and justice, that the gold collar he wore round his
 neck was used by all his successors; and so wonderful were the
 effects attributed to it, that the people were taught to believe,
 that whoever gave a wrong decree with this round his neck, was
 sure to be compressed by it, in proportion to his diverging from
 the line of truth; but in every other instance it would hang loose
 and easy.

The supposed virtue of this collar was a wonderful preservative
 from perjury and prevarication; for no witness would venture
 into a court to support a bad cause, as he apprehended the effects
 of it, if placed round his neck. This cannot be better illustrated,
 than by observing, that, *even at this day*, to swear—“ Dar an
 “ Joadh-Mhoran, i. e. by the collar of Moran,” is deemed a
 most solemn appeal.

Internal peace being restored, we cannot suppose that so able a
 prince and minister would remain tame spectators of the Romans
 re-entering Britain. I therefore take it for granted, that they
 exerted their efforts as powerfully as such unsettled times would
 permit, to retard the progress of the Roman arms there. Already
 had part of Britain been reduced to a Roman province, and a co-
 lony of theirs established there †. Cogidunus, a British prince,
 was gained over to the Roman party, says my author, and every
 thing bid fair for a total conquest. I must here remark, that

* History of Ireland, vol. i.

† Tacit. in Vita. Jul. Agricola.

A.C. this name Cogidunus, is evidently Irish, and, like all our epithets, expressive of the chief excellence of its owner—From Cogadh, war, and Dun, a strong hold, or fortress. Caractacus too, notwithstanding his military skill, and the great trouble he gave the Romans, was at least defeated, taken prisoner, and brought to Rome; where his sensible and manly behaviour, gained him the esteem of that cruel people, who, instead of putting him to death, restored him to his liberty. This name likewise seems Irish, from Cahir, a city, Eacht, an exploit, and Cios, tribute; words which express his abilities, both in conducting an offensive, as well as a defensive war.

59 In the reign of Nero, Suetonius Paulinus was appointed the Roman lieutenant in Britain; and after subduing mighty nations there *, and establishing his garrisons, he prepared for the conquest of Mona, or Anglesey, being a place WHICH SUPPLIED THE REVOLTERS WITH SUCCOURS. But could Anglesey, merely considered in itself, be of such consequence, as to make the power of Rome over Britain to be doubtful till they had reduced it? It surely could not! Small in extent, thin of inhabitants, and destitute of fortresses, it was impossible; and yet Tacitus assures us—"that it was an island, powerful in its inhabitants, and the receptacle of the disaffected †." But did Anglesey, in the invasion of Paulinus, or in that of Agricola afterwards, shew any resistance which could justify this description of the people, or this importance of the island? We see Agricola did not think his conquests in Britain secure, without the acquisition of it; and in both this and Paulinus's expedition, the people displayed no kind of courage, but fled before the invaders. How then can this account be reconciled to reason, but by supposing, what really was the case, i. e. that this island was a medium to convey succours to

* Vita. Jul. Agricol.

† Tacit. Annal. xiv.

Britain? Behold then the proximity of the harbours of Dublin, Wicklow, and of all the Leinster coast! see all Britain take the alarm! Cut off entirely from their friends and allies, nothing but slavery, without a possibility of redemption, presented itself to their eyes, should Paulinus succeed in this expedition; and we see it was the case as soon as Agricola became possessed of it. They therefore every where fly to arms; and Paulinus is hastily obliged to withdraw all his troops from this place, to face the insurgents. Had we wanted the evidence of Irish history to support this, plain reason would point it out to us; and if this insurrection of the Britons was more universal than the former under Caractacus, we must attribute it to the more settled state of Ireland at this time. When so powerful a state as Rome, established her arms so near her, Ireland surely must take the alarm--“proximus ardet Ucaligon!” Agricola then formed the design of attacking Mona at a time when the Irish garrison was called home on a sudden emergency; and this will account for Tacitus’s relation of its capture; which we clearly see, was by a coup de main, since Agricola would not wait for ships or transports to convey his troops, but caused his men and horses to swim across the ford. That it was garrisoned by Irish, we have at this day a striking proof, since, by the confession of Mr. Rowland*, the remains of old fortifications on the summits of Anglesey are yet called Cytter Gioedelod, which strictly imports the Irish city or fortress; the ancient names of other places being also Irish, are still stronger in our favour. The landing place from North Wales into Anglesey, is called Port-atha bhine, or the landing of the yellow ford; and the adjacent territory, is named Tain-datha-bhine, or the territory on land, of the yellow ford.

* Mona Antiqua, p. 27.

After

A.C. After a glorious and humane reign of twenty years, Fearaidhach resigned this life for a better, at his palace of Tara.

66 Fiachadhion, by his address and popularity so far gained on the electors, that by a large majority he was saluted monarch of Ireland. He was the son of Daire, son of Dluthig, son of Deitfin, son of Eochaidh, who was brother to the famous Deaghadh, king of Munster, of the line of Heremon. From this prince his posterity assumed the general name of Dal-Fiathach. In the third year of his administration, he fell by the sword of his successor.

C H A P. V.

Of Fiachadh; the insurrections in Britain, and battle on the Grampian-Hills—a revolution in favour of Elim—succeeded by the famous Tuathal—the great reforms made in the state by this prince—exploits in Britain—conduct of Eochaidh, king of Leinster, the cause of the Boirimhe-Laighen—impolitical conduct of other Leinster princes, particularly injurious to their country—remarks on the Leinster tribute.

69 **F** IACHADH, the son of the great Fearaidhach, was proclaimed monarch of Ireland the same year that Vespasian was saluted emperor of Rome by his army. Soon after this, we are told that Petilius Cerialis attacked with fire and sword the Brigantes, deemed the most numerous of the provinces * of Britain; so that such parts as he was not able to conquer he laid

* Vita Jul. Agricolaë.

waste. We have, in the first and third books of this history, shewn, that the Brigantes settled in South Britain soon after the Picts landed on the northern parts, and that they were of the same blood with the Milesians. No wonder then, if, by aid from home, they should appear so formidable to the Romans. But for Julius Agricola was the entire conquest of Britain reserved. Yet we see it in a manner commenced by the capture of Mona, so formidable to the Romans; and though no defence was made, yet Tacitus is careful to tell us, that by its acquisition Agricola got the character of *a consummate general*, and justly. For by this means, as he advanced more northerly, he feared not fresh enemies in his rear. Wherever he went, he fixt new stations; and the numbers of these, and fixt in places most accessible to Irish invasions, proclaim sufficiently the enemies he most dreaded.

The successes of Agricola far from intimidating, rather added a new stimulus to the counsels of Fiachadh. Fresh forces are poured into North Britain; led on by Cormoc, called Gealta-Goath, and grandfather to Cathoir-more, who Tacitus calls Galgacus; and to his standard are all the disaffected in Britain invited. The battle on the Grampian Hills was fierce and bloody; but the superior discipline of the Roman legions made it decisive in their favour. Yet we should be apt to think it not quite so complete as Tacitus represents it, since we find so little use made of it by his father-in-law. But what farther intentions Fiachadh might have, in conjunction with his Pictish and British allies, we find them defeated by the machinations of his enemies at home. Elim, king of Ulster, a descendant of the great Ruighruidhe, of the house of Ir, leagues with several princes, and enters into particular treaty with the Irish Belgæ and Damnonii; and now, secure of powerful support, he declares war against the monarch. Both armies meet on the plains of Muigh-Boli, where the im-

A.C. perial army is put to the rout, and its chief slain by the sword of his antagonist.

86 By this defeat Elim is proclaimed monarch; whilst the son of Fiachadh, with numbers of his followers, are conveyed to North Britain, from the rage of the victor. This revolution in favour of Elim, has been represented by our writers as an usurpation, and as an usurpation conducted and supported chiefly by the Belgæ and plebeians. To me it does not appear in this light, since Elim was of the royal line of Milesius, and, as we have seen, as legally intitled to the monarchy as any Heberian or Heremonian. The fact I believe is—the provincial kings became highly jealous of the power of the Heremonians, and apprehended a total exclusion from the monarchy, should they longer prevail. They therefore leagued together, to bring about the present revolution, and, it is not improbable, invited the discontented Belgæ and Damnonii, smarting for their former rebellion, to be of their party. This will reconcile the whole relation to truth; since it is an acknowledged fact, that, from the days of Heber and Heremon, to those of Roderic inclusive, comprehending a space of 2439 years, no instance occurs, except that single one of Cairbre, called Cin-Ceat, of any person, but of the pure blood of Gadelus, possessing the Irish throne.

Elim is however represented by our writers as a cruel prince, and a prince who did not seem to study much the good of his country. The jealousy therefore conceived by Domitian against Julius Agricola, and his recall from Britain, before these violent party-disputes broke out in Ireland, was a most happy circumstance; otherwise, in all appearance, what with intestine broils and external enemies, she would soon share the fate of the other states of Europe. For it is manifest from Tacitus, that Agricola meditated a descent upon Ireland.

The

The partizans of the house of Heremon were not idle. Possessed of territories and power in almost every part of the kingdom, they exerted them to the utmost to bring about a fresh revolution. They invited the son of Fiachadh (an exile in North Britain) home; and as the seasons had not been fruitful for some years, they even laboured to make God of their party—resolving a fact arising from natural, to supernatural causes. At the head of his followers, and of a select body of troops given him by his grandfather, the Pictish king, he landed at Jorras-Domhnoin, in Conaught, where he was joined by a good body of troops, commanded by Fiachadh Caifin. With these he proceeded to Tara, where the chiefs of his house attended, and saluted him monarch of Ireland. The *Leabhar-Lecan* (fol. 18.) says, that amongst these were 360 knights. The partizans of Elim were far from being idle spectators of this invasion. At the head of a well appointed army, Elim meets his competitor at Aicle, where his army is put to the rout, and himself left amongst the slain. Eochaidh, king of Leinster, another of his party, is soon after defeated; and this is followed by a number of other battles equally bloody and decisive in favour of the invader. He pursued his enemies through all the provinces, and effectually humbled the rebellious Belgæ and Damnonii, active partizans in this war.

But though Tuathal (for such was this prince's name) waded through seas of blood to the throne—for he fought eighty five battles in pursuit of this object—yet his administration was wise and glorious. His first public act, was a general convention of the states at Tara. At this meeting, he deplored the unhappy situation of Ireland, through the variety of competitors for the monarchy; and we must suppose pointed out the necessity and utility of confining them to one house, since through their own dissensions, they must in the end fall a sacrifice to the power of

A.C. Rome. Reasons like these must be offered to induce the estates to swear, *as they solemnly did*—"by the sun, moon, and stars"—to bear true allegiance to him and to his posterity, of the house of Heremon. His title being thus recognised, in the same manner as were those of his great ancestors Joughaine and Heremon, his next care was to revive and improve upon all the wise institutions of the immortal Ollamh-Fodhla.

To add more dignity and power to the monarchy, the estates granted considerable tracts of land to the royal domain of Tara, taken from the adjoining provinces, and for ever after to be unalienable from it, and which are comprehended in the present county of Meath. This territory was given to add greater splendour to the royal table; and was therefore called Fearon Buird Righ Erion, i. e. the mensal lands of the monarch of Ireland. Having thus augmented his own power, his next care was to add fresh solemnity to religion, to secure the Druids to his interest. In Ethnic Ireland, the deities of the first class, were the Sun or Bel, who presided over the summer, and Samhain, or the moon, who directed the winter. Neptune, or the god of the sea (which the word in Irish signifies) was adored in all seasons by the mariner. Besides these, they had deities of inferior orders, even to the genii that presided over hills and vales, woods and mountains, rivers and lakes! As Tuathal had revived the Feis-Feamhrach, and with more splendour than before his time, it was an act of the highest policy to establish here also the prime seat of religion. The great Ollamh-Fodhla by a decree gave the university of Tara, a precedence over all others in the kingdom; and Tuathal made all the Druid priests of the kingdom subordinate to those of Tara. It was the custom on the eves of Samhain and Bel, or of November and May, for the priests to light up, holy fires through the kingdom; all culinary fires whatever to be then extinguished, nor to be re-kindled but by some of these
new

new ones. All these were for the future to be transferred to Tara. A.C.

In that portion of the imperial domain taken from Munster, he erected a magnificent temple called Tlachta, sacred to the fire of Samhain, and to the Samnothei, or priests of the moon. Here, on every eve of November, were the fires of Samhain lighted up, with great pomp and ceremony, the monarch, the Druids, and the chiefs of the kingdom attending; and from this holy fire and no other, was every fire in the land first light for the winter. It was deemed an act of the highest impiety to kindle the winter fires from any other; and for this favour the head of every house paid a Scrubal, or three pence, tax, to the Arch-Druid of Samhain. In like manner, every May eve was the fire of Bel light up, in the temple of Uisneach, added to the royal domain from the province of Conaught, and munificently constructed by this prince. But in order to make the meetings of the nobility more frequent; and by gaiety and friendly intercourses to soften the manners of a proud and an independent people, he revived the meetings on the plains of Tailtean, in Meath, with uncommon splendour. These Aonachs, or meetings, as we observed in the first book, were instituted by Luigha, called Lamh-Fiahda, or of the Long-Hand, in honour to Tailte, a Spanish princess, who superintended his education. The first day of August was the grand feast, but the fair was opened for fourteen days before, and continued fourteen days after this. It consisted in horse-racing, charioteering, feats of arms, and dexterity. Temporary amphitheatres were erected, for the more easy viewing the different exhibitions; and to the ladies were assigned the most conspicuous places. At these meetings marriages and alliances were formed between the nobility; and every method studied to promote harmony and ease. The triennial meetings of the estates at Tara were carefully attended to, during this reign. The national records were dili-

A.C. diligently revised and corrected; and arts and sciences were highly protected. Besides the above meetings, two others were particularly convened; one at Cruachan, to examine the laws and police of the kingdom, and make their report to the estates of Tara, what laws wanted to be revised, what exploded, and what new ones to be added to the national code. The meeting at Emania had for its sole object a retrospection to, and a reformation of the laws relative to mechanic arts, trade, and commerce; for great abuses had crept into all departments of the state since the usurpation of Cairbre, notwithstanding the endeavours of the just Feredach; and this last institution shews clearly, how well informed Tacitus was *, when he declared the commerce of the Irish in his days to be much more extensive than that of the Britons.

The establishment of internal peace and œconomy, gave vigour to the arms of the Irish in Britain; who, in conjunction with their Pictish allies, reduced the Romans and their British friends to a state of great distress and misery. So much so, that
118 Adrian himself, came into Britain in person, to prevent the total loss of the island; and yet after exerting his utmost efforts, we see them end in forming a wall from the river Eden in Carlisle, to the river Tine, near Newcastle, to prevent these invasions and incursions, which he was unable to oppose.

But neither the great abilities of Tuathal as a statesman and a general, could secure him from domestic affliction. His eldest daughter he had married to Eochaidh, king of Leinster, and her sister attended her to the Leinster court. Eochaidh being of an amorous cast, paid his court privately to his sister-in-law, and gained her affections. The queen informed of this illicit correspondence, upbraids her sister, who, overwhelmed with grief, shame,

* In Vita Jul. Agricolaë.

and remorse, fell into convulsions, which only ended with life. A.C.
The queen, shocked at the perfidy of her husband, and the sudden death of her sister, soon after followed her. The monarch, informed of these transactions, convenes an extraordinary meeting of the national estates at Tara, and there relates the above facts. Eochaidh is immediately put under the ban of the empire; and the different provinces send in their quotas of troops to enforce this decree. The king of Leinster, unable to oppose such combined forces, offered the most abject submission, and requested the monarch to propose any terms, to which he would submit.

Peace was concluded, and he restored to his dignity, on his sending hostages to secure, for his own life, the payment of the following tribute every second year, and the estates of Leinster bound themselves by a most solemn oath—i. e. “By the sun “moon, and stars”—for themselves, and for their successors, to have this tribute for ever after continued. It consisted of 3000 cows, 3000 ounces of pure silver, 3000 mantles richly embroidered, 3000 hogs, 3000 sheep, and 3000 copper cauldrons. This tribute is the famous Boroimhe Laighean, or Leinster tax, the source of much blood and confusion to the kingdom; and from which the reader may conceive some idea of the wealth and power of ancient Ireland. As an acknowledgement for the assistance granted to the monarch on this occasion, a part of this tribute was paid to the kings of Emania, and after the ruin of that great house, to the people of Orgial; a second to the kings of Conaught; a third to the people of Munster; and the remainder into the imperial coffers.

This is not the first instance in which the conduct of the kings of Leinster has been injurious to their own state. We have seen an heavy tax imposed on them, by Conaire the Great, for the murder of Eiderseoil, his father. The present fine was attended with still more fatal consequences! By the ill conduct of Maolmordha,

A.C. mordha, king of Leinster, in the beginning of the eleventh century, Ireland was near becoming a province of Denmark ; and the lewdness and irascibility of Mac Murroch, in the decline of the next age, for ever deprived her of her liberty, and entailed afflictions and distresses on her sons and on their posterity, sensibly felt even at this day !

On the imposition of this famous tribute, the learned Dr. Warner * makes reflections, which proclaim a clear head, and a good heart. But by the law of Eric, or retribution, if murder or any uncommon outrage was committed, the friends and relations of the culprit were taxed. If the criminal was obscure, it was raised upon the community at large ; but the prince being the father of all his people, and they all equally related to him, it seemed just, that they should alike advance their proportions of the fine. Had this, like the tribute imposed by Conaire, continued during the life of the party aggrieved only, it had been happy for the nation ; and yet, after all, the resentment shewn, seems to reflect honour on the national virtue. For in the present instance there was double murder, aggravated by the crime of incest ; and every violence offered to females, were always punished exemplarily.

After a glorious reign of thirty years Tuathal, who was surnamed Teacht-mhar, or the Wished-for, fell by the sword of Mal, a second branch of the house of Ir, descended through the renowned Conall Cearnach, from Ruighruidhe the Great.

* History of Ireland, vol. i.

C H A P. VI.

Of Mal—Feidhlimidh the Law-giver—different attempts made towards a reformation of the laws and constitution—the Lex Talionis substituted for the law called Earc, or Eric—of Cathoir the Great—his remarkable will, and the principal families descended from him.

NOTWITHSTANDING the oath sworn by the national estates, to bear due allegiance to Tuathal, and to his posterity *only*, in exclusion to the other royal houses of Ireland, yet we find Mal, of the line of Ir, solemnly recognised as monarch; so necessary is power to enforce allegiance! This revolution, and the confusion arising from it, accounts well for the Romans extending their bounds, as they did at this time, in Britain, under the reign of Antoninus Pius, and securing it by a new wall. The sword of his successor put a period to the life of Mal, after swaying the Irish sceptre four years.

137

Feidhlimidh, the son of the great Tuathal, of the line of Heremon, was proclaimed monarch. His mother Baine, was daughter to Sgaile-Balbh, a British prince. Having established peace and subordination at home, and finding the Romans satisfied with the dominion they held in Britain, without a wish to extend their conquests; and being besides of a peaceable disposition, he turned his thoughts on revising and amending the national code of laws.

141

Many attempts were made at a reformation of the laws, by several of his predecessors, but of no great duration. From the beginning the monarchy was hereditary and elective; that is

A.C. hereditary with regard to blood, as none could be chose but such as were of the royal line of Milesius; but elective with respect to the persons of that blood. But the royal blood being very numerous, in the different great houses, was the source, as we have seen, of almost continued wars between the different competitors: the moment a prince of uncommon talents filled the throne, he at once saw how destructive this mode of election was to the nation, and laboured to lessen the number of candidates, by confining them to his own line. This was the case with that prince of legislators, Ollamh-Fodhla, with Jughaine-More, with his own father Tuathal, and now with himself. He recommended this great object to the consideration of the national estates, and they observed it as long as he held the power of enforcing it.

But though the laws of the land were executed with great impartiality during the administrations, of the above recited great princes, yet in the revolutions that intervened, many abuses crept in. So much so, that in the reign of Eochaidh-Aremh, the entire body of the literati were banished the kingdom, though protected in Ulster. Their great patron, Connor, saw the necessity of a reformation; and under his auspices Forchern, Neid, and Atharni * formed a digest of the laws, and rules for judging in difficult cases; which were founded on such strict equity, as to be transmitted to posterity, under the name of Breatha-Nimhe, or Celestial Judgements. Similar attempts were made centuries before, renewed by the celebrated Moran, under Feredach, and revived by Tuathal. So exact were these, that even the Cain, or impost raised on conquered lands, was determined! But the principal reformation made by Feidhlimidh—and a great one it must be confessed it was, as it operated sensibly on the manners

* Ogygia, p. 217. Cambr. Everf. p. 157, &c. &c.

of the people—was to abolish the law of Eare, or amercement, A.C. and in its place to substitute the Lex Talionis. By this new law, crimes were no longer punished by fines. Murder was to be atoned for by the death of the perpetrator only; the loss of a limb, an eye, an ear, &c. were punished by similar pains inflicted on the delinquents, in the most public manner. The loss of cattle, and other property, were to be made good by the defrauder only; or if unable to make such restitution, some other punishment adequate to his crime was pronounced, and the public at large made good the loss to the individual. This most salutary law had all the good effects that were expected from it, and eased the subjects from great oppressions. Before this, the most atrocious of crimes, a very few excepted, were punished here, as in every other part of Europe, by fine only; and this fine was raised on the estates of the relations of the delinquents; or, if unable to pay it, on the county or barony at large. From this wholesome law he got the epithet Reacht-mhar, or the Law-giver. The candid reader, when he peruses this account, will be convinced upon what slight foundations English writers have upbraided the Irish, as the *only* nation of Europe who punished murder and robbery by fine only. The fact however is, that this very method was what was adopted by the old Britons, the Saxons, the Franks, &c. but in Ireland, from the days of Ollamh-Fodhla, violence offered to women, or insult to any individual, during the sessions at Tara, were punishable by death, out of the power of the monarch to pardon, and of course were exceptions from this general law.

One would be tempted to infer from this law, that Feidhlimidh, in his intended reformation, had consulted the code of Roman laws; or had perused the Old Testament, where, in Kings, we find the law of retaliation established. But be this as it may, so much was this prince revered and feared, that the state received

A.C. no kind of disturbance during his reign; and he died peaceably at Tara, a fate reserved for very few of his predecessors.

150 On the convention of the estates at Tara, to choose a successor to the crown, after much intrigue the election at length was declared to be in favour of Cathoir-More, grandson to the renowned Gaolta-Gooith, or Galgacus, as Tacitus calls him, who so bravely opposed Julius Agricola in Britain, and of the line of Heremon. To support this election, short as his reign was, we find him engaged in bloody wars. In the third year of his administration, before he headed his troops to the fatal battle of Moigh-acha, in Meath, he made his will, satisfied that he should not survive that day's encounter. Part of the heads of this curious will are delivered by Mr. O'Flaherty *, from an authentic copy; and I find it more minutely detailed in the third book of Lecan. I shall give the heads of it entire, not only as a piece of great antiquity, but as it proves the great riches and splendour of the kingdom in those days.—“ To his beloved son Rosa, called Failge, or of the
 “ Rings, he bequeaths his kingdom of Leinster, to which he
 “ adds, ten shields richly ornamented, ten swords with gold
 “ handles, ten gold cups, and wishes him a numerous and war-
 “ like posterity, to govern Tara. To his second son Daire-Ba-
 “ rach, he bequeaths Tuath Laighean” (this must certainly
 mean the present Fingal, and part of the county of Wicklow);
 “ and he wishes him to become a successful hero; and always to
 “ rule over the Gailean-glas,” (part of the ancient Belgæ.) “ To
 “ this he adds, 150 spears ornamented with silver, fifty shields
 “ ornamented and embossed with gold and silver, fifty swords of
 “ exquisite workmanship, fifty rings of the purest gold, 150
 “ cloaks of rich manufacture, and seven military standards.
 “ To his third son Breasal, seven ships of burthen, fifty

* Ogygia, p. 311.

“ shields, richly ornamented with gold and silver, five swords A C.
“ with gold hilts, and five chariots, with harnesses and
“ horses. To these he adds the lands on the banks of
“ the river Amergin, and charges him to watch over the old
“ inhabitants, who will be otherwise troublesome to him. To
“ Cetach, the fourth, he leaves possessions, thinking it a pity
“ to separate him from his brothers, though it were on free
“ lands (Saor-fobra). To Feargus-Luascan, the fifth, he left
“ nothing ;” but his brothers assigned to him ample possessions.
“ To Olioll, the sixth, his backgammon-tables and men, say-
“ ing, that neither the possession of lands or towns would be of
“ any use to him, as he never attended to any study but gaming.
“ To his son Aongus, the seventh, he gave nothing ;” but this
defect his brothers supplied. “ To Eochaidh-Timhin, the eighth,
“ he left his benediction *only*, wishing his posterity may adhere
“ to their blood ; and calls him Treath-fear, or a weak man ;
“ for he was so far imposed on, as to give away a tract of land,
“ claimed as a promise in his sleep. To his son Criomthan, the
“ ninth, he leaves fifty brass balls, with brass maces to play with,
“ ten backgammon-tables of curious workmanship, and two
“ chess-tables ; and to his youngest son Fiacha, the tenth, called
“ Baiceadh, or the Lamé, who he praises for his bravery and spi-
“ rit, and for the universal love he gained, he leaves the country
“ about Wexford : recommends him to support his brother, and
“ bequeaths him besides fifty large vessels made of yew, fifty
“ drinking cups, and fifty pied horses with brass bits. To his
“ nephew Tuathal he gives ten chariots with horses and harnesses,
“ five pair of backgammon-tables, five chess-boards with ivory
“ men, thirty shields embossed with gold, and fifty swords highly
“ polished. To Mogh-Chorb 100 black and white cows
“ with their calves, coupled two and two with brass yokes ;
“ 100 shields, 100 javelins coloured red, 100 polished
“ spears,

“ spears; fifty saffron-coloured cloaks; 100 horses of different
 “ colours, 100 gold pins for cloaks, 100 goblets, elegantly
 “ finished; 100 large vats made of yew; fifty chariots cu-
 “ riously finished, ten of which were of exquisite workmanship;
 “ fifty chess-tables, fifty playing tables of different kinds; fifty
 “ trumpets, fifty standards, fifty copper cauldrons, with the pri-
 “ vilege of being a privy counsellor to the king of Leinster: to
 “ the prince of Leis he left 100 cows, 100 shields, 100 swords,
 “ 100 spears, and seven spotted ensigns.”

As he himself had foretold, Cathoir was slain in this battle, and his army routed. From the issue of this prince most of the great houses in Leinster, of the race of Heremon, claim their origin, except the princely line of Fitz Patrick, the O'Dwyers, and O'Brenans, who claim a still earlier origin. The different spreading branches from this royal source are most minutely detailed in the third book of Lecan. The principal chiefs are, from Rosa, eldest son of Cathoir, O'Connor Faly, or more properly Failge, an epithet yet preserved by the family, to denote their descent from Rosa Failge. This house has been ever remarkable for their attachment to the liberties of their country; and were dispossessed of most of the territory of Hi Failge, in the reign of Philip and Mary. The O'Dempfies, lords of Clannamaherh, and the O'Duns are also of this race. From Dairc-Barach are O'Gorman, O'Mallone, O'Moony, &c. descended. The issue of Fiachadh, the youngest son, gave more kings to the throne of Leinster than those of all his brothers united. From him are descended the royal family of Mac-Murroch Cavanagh, kings of Leinster; the noble families O'Toole, O'Byrne, O'Murphy, O'Dowling, O'Maoil-rian, O'Cinselagh, &c. &c.

C H A P. VII.

Of Con of the Hundred Battles—the bloody battle of Cnucha, and death of the famous Cumhal—Eogan flies to Spain, and weds the daughter of Eimhir the Great—returns to Ireland with a body of Spaniards, and recovers the territories of his ancestors—wages war with the monarch, which terminates by a famous partition treaty—Con attacks the Laghenians—a renewal of the war between him and Eogan—battle of Lena, and death of Eogan—Con invades Ulster—his death.

CON, called Cead-Chatha, or of the Hundred Battles, the son of Feidhlimidh the Law-giver, by Una, a daughter of Danemark, the son of the great Tuathal, of the race of Heremon, succeeded to the monarchy. He was a prince of great abilities, as well for the field as the cabinet; and he had occasion for all these virtues, to keep the crown on his head as long as he did. His reign is replete with great events; and I have taken uncommon pains to explore them, and to represent this period of our history in its proper light. 153

It appears by a most respectable piece of antiquity, called Chatha-Cnucha, or the Battle of Cnucha, that at the time of the present revolution, Cumhal, the son of Frenmor, grandson to the celebrated Baoisgne (from whom the Leinster knights were called Clana Baoisgne) the son of the monarch Nuadha, the hereditary general of Leinster, was in Albany, meditating designs against the Romans and their British allies. Con, the better to secure the province of Leinster, had appointed his Dalta, or tutor, Criomthan, the son of Niachorb, to the government of that province;

A.C. vince; which Cumhal being informed of, as well as that he was
 154 labouring to distress and reduce the children of Cathoir-More, he
 hastened over with his troops, and his body-guards, consisting of
 150 select knights—"to revisit the verdant plains of Ireland,
 "and to possess, and valiantly protect the Sanguine-handed king-
 "dom of Leinster." Criomthan was soon compelled to quit his
 charge; and Cumhal, in conjunction with the children of Ca-
 thoir-More, and the Heberians of Munster, headed by the cele-
 brated Eogan, formed the design of attacking and dethroning
 the monarch. Con, well instructed in their designs, summoned
 the estates to Tara. As he suspected, all the disaffected were
 absent; and it was proposed to put them under the ban of the
 empire. But this Con would not agree to. Instead of this he
 dispatched ambassadors to the Naas, called Naas-Laighean (as
 being the metropolis of Leinster, where their parliament met,
 and were then deliberating on this matter), requiring the attend-
 155 ance of Cumhal and the nobles of the province at Tara, other-
 wise denouncing war against them. The latter they accepted;
 and the time and place of meeting was agreed on. Cumhal dis-
 patches messengers to his different allies. The sons of Cathoir
 were indefatigable in their endeavours to promote the levies, in
 revenge for the death of their father; and Eogan, the king of
 Munster, had his own reasons for being an active partizan in this
 war. Almost the entire kingdom of Munster was at this time
 governed by the posterity of Deaghadh, of the line of Heremon;
 so that from exiles they became rulers of the province, which
 had with such hospitality received their ancestors, when expelled
 the North. A revolution like the present must be ardently wish-
 ed for by him. Thus private interest and revenge (as it often
 happens) added new vigour to the ambitious views of Cumhal.
 The levies from all parts, of both parties, hasten to the scene of
 action, eager for the fight. The adjacent hills become soon co-
 vered

vered with the tents, standards, and military array of the different armies. The generals on each side remark the dispositions of the enemy's troops; and each chief is allotted his ground, and the troops he is to attack. We are surprised with what minuteness this is detailed; but particularly in the battle of Lena, where every commander is assigned his particular service:—a proof that in ancient times, neither generalship nor military abilities were neglected.

The battle, as usual, was fierce and bloody, and well maintained for some hours; but the superior abilities of Gaul, the son of Morni, master of the knights of Conaught, and general to the imperial army, with the number and bravery of his knights, at length prevailed; the allied troops, closely pressed, gave way on every side; when Cumhal, seeing all lost, at the head of his guards, attacks Gaul sword in hand. He fell by the hands of this invincible leader, and every one of his knights shared the same fate!

O'Flaherty * tells us, that Eogan, after labouring in vain to cover the kingdom of Munster out of the hands of the Deaghaidhs, was obliged to fly to Spain, where he remained an exile for some years; when he returned with a large reinforcement of Spaniards. Neither Keating, nor the late translator of the Book of Munster, take any notice of this flight of Eogan, though all agree that he married a Spanish princess. My copy of this most valuable piece of antiquity, which I had transcribed from one wrote in the year 1713, (as he himself tells us in it) by Dermot O'Connor, the translator of Keating, and which he took from the copy of the Mac Bruodins, hereditary historians of North Munster, positively affirms that Eogan did retire to Spain, where he married Beara, the lovely daughter of Eimhir the

* Ogygia, p. 315.

A.C. Great, the son of Mioghna, king of Spain; though no writer has assigned the true cause of Eogan's flight, nor even taken the least notice of this remarkable battle of Cnucha, which throws such light on the whole. And here I must once for all observe, that this relation is highly worthy perusal. There is a noble style of native simplicity which runs through it; much good sense is displayed; and we are surprised with the polite and elegant language, which, in the different councils, each party and each chief expresses for his intended antagonist; for each chief commander was assigned his place of action.

Con, by this decisive battle, acquires new power and popularity; and pursues his enemies very closely; particularly the young Eogan, whose enterprising genius and abilities he dreaded, and therefore determined to blast them in the bud. Eogan, instead of succours, finds the Deaghaidhs of Munster his avowed enemies; and therefore hastily retires to the court of Nuaghadh Dearg, prince of part of South Munster, and of the race of Ith.

156 From thence he fled to Spain, and was most graciously received by the monarch Eimhir, whose daughter he married. Here he kept up a close correspondence with his friends in Ireland: and the race of Heber finding themselves likely to be totally subdued by the Deaghaidhs and by Con, exerted every sinew to invite him back.

A Druid of the first quality repairs to Spain *, to inform him of the true state of Ireland. His father-in-law engages to grant a supply of Spaniards, with his own son Fraoich to head them, with transports and stores; and Mac Neid, the son of Lugha, of the race of Ith, and Conaire, the son of Mogha Lamha, with a select body of brave Mamonians, impatiently await his arrival.

163 The first use he makes of his troops after landing, is to attack the usurpers of his crown †. Lugha Allathach and Aongus, of

* Ionnfuidhe Mhuighe-Leana.

† Leahhar Muimhuin.

the Deaghaid, or Enrnain race, meet him, and are defeated in three different battles ; in the last of which, at Samhdoire, Lugha fell. Aongus, unable singly to oppose the victorious Eogan, repairs to the monarch Con, to request his assistance ; observing, that in supporting him he added greater weight to the race of Heremon, now, *in his house*, like to be subverted by their common enemy the Heberians. Con, determined by these reasons, sent him back with a reinforcement of (Chuigh-Catha) 15,000 men. With these he returns ; and at Ibh Leathan, in the county 164 of Cork, the two armies meet, where, after a most bloody battle, the imperial auxiliaries are routed, and Aongus falls by the sword of Eogan.

Having thus reduced the usurpers of his crown, and recovered the inheritance of his ancestors, Eogan now thinks of revenging himself on the monarch, and of raising, in his own person, the line of Heber to their ancient dignity. But to succeed in this project, required not only uncommon military abilities, but great caution, wisdom, and circumspection also. All these Eogan possessed in an eminent degree *. He sends his ambassadors (always Druids, as, on account of their profession, held in great reverence by the people) to his allies. The one to Fiacadh, the son of Cathoir, and now king of Leinster, he charges to remind this prince of their ancient amity ; to acquaint him of his success ; and that now is the time to be revenged on Con,—“ who killed “ his father at the battle of Maigh-acha, and at the same time “ gave himself the epithet Baiceda.” Those sent to Breas Mac Broin and Eochadh Cobha, kings of Ulster, amongst other in- 165 structions to induce them to enter into the present league, were required to recapitulate all the injuries their ancestors received from the line of Heremon ; but particularly—“ that it was

* Ionnfuidhe Muigh-Lena.

A.C. "Feidhlimidh, the father of Con, who had killed their father in battle, and deprived them of that succession."

On a review of his army, Eogan finds it to consist of (Naoi-Catha) 25,000 fighting men; and with these he attacked and defeated the monarch in ten different pitched battles. His allies now join him in numbers; the troops of Leinster at Ibh Leathan, in the county of Cork; and those of Ulster at Fion-Carn. Nor is the monarch idle; he summons his friends and allies to attend him at the palace of Cruachan, in Conaught; not thinking it prudent to remain any longer at Tara, surrounded as he was with such a variety of enemies. Here he was waited upon by Connall, king of the province; by the renowned hero Goll Mac Morni and his knights, with other dependents: and this retreat made Eogan exultingly say to his generals:—"As Con pursued me through Ireland to Munster, I will now in return pursue him through
 166 "Ireland to Conaught." Eogan accordingly put his army in motion; and in a day's march from Cruachan, a council of war is held; and it is determined to send ambassadors to Con, announcing their intent. By advice of his friends he enters into negotiation with Eogan, and, after much altercation, a peace is agreed on; by which Con consents to divide Ireland into two equal partitions, viz. into Northern and Southern; (just as the partition was originally made by their two great ancestors Heber and Heremon;) the southern half to be for the future denominated Leath Mogha, or Eogan's half, (Mogha being one of his names); and the northern half, Leath Cuin, or Con's half.

By this partition, from Galway to Eifgir-riada, or the Long Mountains, through Cluan Mac Nois and Cluanard, to Dublin, was a deep trench cut, and high walls made, strengthened from place to place with redoubts, which were to be protected by 9000 men; and the southern division was to acknowledge the line of Heber as their sovereigns, whilst the northern half, with the title

title of monarch, was reserved for the descendants of Heremon. A.C.
This is that famous division of Ireland, to this day called Leath Mogha and Leath Cuin.

Scarce was this peace ratified, when the enterprising spirit of Con led him into new wars and new difficulties. Recollecting the assistance given to his great opponent Eogan, by the people of Leinster, he sends ambassadors to the Naas, demanding the Bo- 167
roimhe Laighean, or tribute, exacted from that people by his grand-father Tuathal; and which the then estates solemnly swore for themselves, and for their successors, to continue to him and to his posterity. But oaths we find were as little binding in days of antiquity, as in these our more polished times. The Lagenians bid defiance to the monarch; and by the dint of the sword only was it exacted twice. The third year, the Lagenians, better provided, met the imperialists at Maistean, and, after a bloody contest, gained a complete victory over them, obliging the 173
monarch to quit the palace of Tara, which they held for four years after. Con made great levies, and the fifth year drove the Lagenians out of Tara; compelled them to pay the tribute and arrears, and carried off hostages, to secure the future payment of this tax.

We are furnished with no further particulars of this prince till the year 181; when we find the war between him and Eogan renewed. The pretence was this*; Eogan, on a royal tour through his dominions, visited Dublin, which, even in those days, we find called Atha-Cliath-Dubhline, which imports the 181
passage over the ford of *the black pool*. He found a greater number of ships on the north side of the Liffey, than on the south side; and, of course, the revenues of the monarch *here* was much greater than his own. This relation of the trade of Dub-

* Ionnfuidhe Muigh-Lena.

A.C. lin will be less doubted, when we recollect the evidence of Tacitus *, about a century earlier; and to these we shall add, that in the days of St. Patrick we find it celebrated † “for its extent
“and magnificence, the number and riches of its inhabitants,
“the grandeur of its edifices, and the greatness of its commerce, &c.”

Glad of this pretence, Eogan insists that the division of Ireland made with Con, implied an equal distribution of the revenues in the ports of Dublin and Galway; and that the surplus which Con had received for fifteen years past, should be accounted for, otherwise denouncing war against him. The monarch, sensible of his inferiority, would gladly have compromised the matter; but it was evident that Eogan meditated nothing less than the monarchy of Ireland. Both sides prepare for battle; and at Maigh-Lena, in the King's County, is the fate of Ireland to be determined between these heroes.

The evening before the day of battle, Con held a council of war; and, after hearing the different opinions, he observed that the army of Eogan was superior to his in number and discipline, (consisting of 27,000 national troops, besides 2000 Spaniards, and 1000 other auxiliaries), and, therefore, that, instead of meeting him in the field next day, he judged it more prudent to surprise them that very night, or before the day-break of next morning. To all this the council agreed, except Goll Mac Morni, the monarch's general, and chief of the knights of Conaught, who rising up, said:—“On the day that my first arms were put into
“my hands, I solemnly vowed never to attack an enemy at night,
“by surprize, or under any kind of disadvantage: to this day I
“have religiously adhered to this promise, nor shall I now break
“it.” The attack was however agreed on, but Goll declared

* Vita Jul. Agricol.

† Trias Thaummat.

he would not be in the field before day-light. In this attack the Munster troops, though surpris'd, behaved with great intrepidity; and Eogan, and his brother-in-law Fraoch, dealt death on every side, followed by their select bands. In this distress Con calls upon Goll, (for it was now clear day), with his knights, to engage the king of Munster. This great hero, already grievously wounded in many places, soon fell a victim to the hero of Conaught, and his brother-in-law, the prince of Spain, experienced the same fate. The body of Eogan, pierced by a thousand wounds, was rais'd up on the shields of the soldiery, and expos'd to the view of both armies; which Goll perceiving, cried out—"Lay down the body of the king of Munster, for he died as an hero should die!" Thus ended this mighty contest, as fatal to Eogan, as a similar one had been formerly to his great ancestor Heber!

I confess, that the Psalter of Cashill declares Eogan to have been killed in his bed by Con; but besides the infamy attending the action, it would not be the way to intimidate the Munster army. The dishonour of attacking an enemy by surprize, and that some hours before the time appointed—an act before this period unheard of in Ireland—reflects sufficiently on the character of Con; without adding to it, what seem'd both improbable and impossible too, in these days of heroism. The issue of Eogan, were two sons and two daughters; but Olioll, his eldest son, at his father's decease, not being arriv'd at sufficient age to govern Munster, Mac Niad, who so valiantly assist'd in restoring this prince's father to the throne of his ancestors, was unanimously invest'd with the command of Leath-Mogha. This done, the people call'd loudly on their new chief, to lead them once more against the perfidious Con. All this Con foresaw, and with great policy evaded. He sent ambassadors to Mac Niad, demanding a
cessation.

A.C. cessation of arms *; and to give greater weight to this negotiation, offered him privately his daughter Sadhbha in marriage, with a full acknowledgement of his right to govern Leath-Mogha. The terms of peace were still humiliating to the monarch. He consented besides to give to the people of Munster 1000 steeds, 200 chariots, 200 ships, 200 spears, 200 swords, 200 slaves, 200 hounds; but what was still more mortifying, *his own torques, his sword, and his shield!* Peace was thus proclaimed; Mac Niad married the princess Sadhbha; the limits of the Eifgar-Riadha, and the absolute independency of Leath-Mogha were acknowledged in the fullest manner.

182 Secure of the friendship of Munster, the restless monarch turns his thoughts on the Ultonians, who embraced every opportunity of disturbing his government. He invaded Ulster with a large army, in which battles were fought with various successes. At length, says the Psalter of Cashill, he fell by the sword of Tubbraidhe-Tireach, two years after the battle of Lena. The Annals of *the Four Masters* say he was slain in the battle of Tuath-Aimhrios; Keating, and O'Flaherty, that he was murdered at Tara. But this last death is so inconsistent with the spirit of heroism, of those days, that I can by no means agree to it. By this relation it appears that Con reigned exactly thirty years; years of great trouble and anxiety to him, it must be confessed, as well as of infinite distress to the kingdom.

We observed, in the beginning of this chapter, that the celebrated Cumhal fell in the battle of Cnucha. He left behind him but one son, who was then a child; but who, as soon as he had attained the age fit for command, which was soon after the partition peace between Con and the king of Munster, this last ap-

* Leabhar-Muimhan.

pointed him general of all the forces of Leath-Mogha. This was A.C.
the famous Fion, so celebrated by our bards.

C H A P. VIII.

Conaire, the son of Mogha-Lamha, proclaimed monarch—remarks on this election—the settlements of the three Carbres, his sons—Olioll, king of Munster, demands the Leinster tribute—death of Conaire, and election of Art, the son of Con—Mac Con applies to him for protection, and is refused—raises a large army of foreigners, with which he invades the kingdom—the general Fion deserts the Imperial standard—an account of the battle of Muicruimhe—the first regular Scottish or Irish settlement in Albany—will of Olioll, king of Munster, &c.

ON the death of Con, the estates proceeded to the election 183
of a successor; and, after much policy and canvassing, the majority of suffrages were announced to be in favour of Conaire, the son of Mogha-Lamha, a lineal descendant of Conaire the Grand, of the Deguids of Munster, and line of Heremon. The reader, who has already seen the power of this house so humbled by Eogan, king of Munster, will no doubt be surprised to find the grandson of Lughach, who fell by the sword of Eogan, raised to the dignity of monarch, and this at a time when the Heberians were so powerful! It merits an elucidation.

Eithne, the mother of Conaire, was sister to Mac Niad, of the race of Ith. This house was established in Munster by Heber himself; of course must have a more natural attachment to his race, than to those of Heremon or Ir. Mac Niad was not only himself active in the cause of Eogan, but also detached the young

A.C. Conaire from the interests of his family, in the same cause, as we have already observed. This alliance of Conaire was made still stronger, by his marrying the second daughter of the deceased Con. By this means, the pretensions of the line of Ir were defeated, and Conaire proclaimed monarch.

An undisturbed peace being established at home, the politics of Conaire were turned towards Britain, and towards the aggrandizement of his own family. In the first he succeeded so well, that the Britons were up in arms every where; and had his reign continued longer, in all probability the Roman power over that country would have been totally annihilated; nor was he less happy in his second attempt. He had by his queen Seraid, daughter to Con, three sons, princes of great valour and abilities; and these were called by old writers, Carbre Mufe, Carbre Baifean, and Carbre Riada, from the different principalities assigned them. The first was called Mufe, and from his establishment at Musery, in the county of Cork, so called to this day. The name of Baifean was given to the second, from the barony of Corca Bhascin, in the county of Clare; and the settlement of the third Carbre (the eldest brother), was in Kerry, and about Loch-Lene. He found other opportunities of extending the power of his race. Ogaman, a descendant of Fiatach, (from whom this branch took the name of Dal-Fiatach) of the same line, he had address enough, on the death of Tiobradh, king of Ulster, of the race of Ir, to have elected to the government of Ulster; and by this means had the ancient claims of his family to the hereditary patrimony in that province established. The new king of Ulster granted moreover, to the eldest Carbre, a great part of the present county of Antrim, from him called Riada, and since contracted to Route. But the farther views of this prince were prevented by an immature death; being, it is said, murdered in the ninth year of his reign, though some writers affirm he fell in battle as usual.

In the administration of Conaire, and on the death of Mac Niad, Olioll, the son of the great Eogan, was called to the throne of Munster; and we are surprised to find that he claimed, and obliged the Lagenians to pay the *Eric ui Dreisgoil*, being the fine imposed on that province by Conaire I. for the murder of his father. One should think, that this fine was rather the property of the family, and of course belonged to Conaire, than the Heberians; but perhaps he assigned it to them, in consideration of their supporting him in the monarchy. This will explain why it afterwards was, for very many years, paid into the Heberian line, kings of Munster; and why they united with the sons of Conaire, to revenge the murder of their father.

Neimhidh, the son of Sruibhihin, the regicide, was of the same blood with Conaire, and was instigated to this base act by the love he bore to the empress, and the hopes of possessing her; but Olioll, in conjunction with the three Carbres, pursued him so closely, that in the bloody battle of Cinnefebha, he was slain by the sword of Carbre Riada. Mac Con, the son of Mac Niad, who also assisted Neimhidh, received a deep wound in his leg, from Carbre Mufe, and the whole party were defeated. On the death of Conaire,

Art, the son of Con, was elected monarch of Ireland; to whom Mac Con and his party applied for protection, Olioll affording them none in Munster. But the new monarch had too many obligations to the king of Munster, to grant an asylum to his enemies; they therefore fled the kingdom. Lugha-Leagha, brother to Olioll, shocked at this alliance between his brother and the son of the murderer of their father, together with the prince of Ossory, determined to share the same fate with Mac Con, and accordingly quitted the kingdom. The first land they made was Albany, or Scotland; and here they applied to the Pictish king for succours, exclaiming against the injustice of Olioll, in depriving

A.C. ing the race of Ith of their birthright in Munster, and against his unnatural alliance with the monarch Art. But the Pict, though fond of fishing in troubled water, yet prudently declined entering deep into the schemes of the exiles, till they should try what farther assistance they could procure. From thence they remove to Wales; and Beine Briot, son to the king of Britain, and a most renowned hero, promises, in the name of his father, not only large supplies, but at a convenient time to head them in person. Mac Con and his party from Wales proceed to Brittany in France; where, by the testimony of Lecan *, he had ample possessions, and in them he raised a large body of troops. We have in Book IV. p. 164, remarked that the Irish monarch Labhra had a principality in Gaul; and we there shewed that this account threw a new light on what had been related by Cenau and Mezeray on this head. This in all probability by descent or otherwise, might have fallen to the share of the house of Ith.

221

But be this as it may, with a large body of troops, Britons, Gauls, and Picts, he landed in the West of Conaught, and being joined by his friends and associates at home, his whole army, on a review, appeared to be composed of 30,000 men. The chiefs were summoned, and after much debate it was agreed to send ambassadors to Art, and these were Lugha-Leagha, and Nuadh his chief Ollamh.

On their appearance at Tara, they announced the purport of their embassy. Their instructions were, that Art should give up Leath Mogha, or the southern half of Ireland, with the Port of Dublin, to Mac Con; or in case of refusal to denounce war against him, and challenge him to battle on the plains of Muicruimhe, near Athonry. Art, who wanted not for policy, wished to gain time, by offering some concessions; but finding the ambassadors

* Book iii.

resolute,

resolute, and that an explicit answer was expected, he spiritedly told them—"that he would never consent to their proposals; that he was unworthy a crown who declined fighting for it; that it was through rivers of blood his father waded to the sovereignty; and that he would meet Mac Con with his foreign mercenaries at Muigh-Cruimhe." The next point to be considered was the time of action. Art demanded a year, in order to collect his forces, as Mac Con had not given him sufficient notice. But to this they observed, that as their army was mostly composed of foreigners, who were enlisted but for a limited time, this could not be granted. By mutual agreement the battle was to be fought in fourteen days. Art immediately dispatches expresses to all parts. Olioll sent him a large body of troops, headed by his nineteen sons, seven of which were legitimate. The king of Conaught joined him likewise with the Clana-Morni. He went himself to Almhuin, the seat of the famous Fion Mac Cumhal, in Leinster, to demand his assistance, and that of his troops; but the general expecting this visit, absented himself, and drew off his soldiers from thence. He then demanded of his chief judge (Reachtair) where Fion was? He said that he absented himself on purpose, as he had entered into treaty with Mac Con, and engaged not to oppose his designs. This defection of Fion mortified him greatly. His troops were the best disciplined in the kingdom, and on their intrepidity he had his greatest independence. However, his army was both powerful and numerous, and besides highly appointed. But on leaving Almhuin, he denounced a curse on Fion and on his soldiery, whom he upbraided for their ingratitude. "I allowed (said he) *to these military*, cattle, cloaths, and the privilege of quartering on my people from November to May. To the hero Fion, I gave money; and at the last assembly at Tailtean, I presented him fifty broad shining swords, fifty shields, and fifty spears."

The

A.C. The opening of this battle * is highly majestic. "The hero
 " of Tara, the irresistible wave in enmity, as quick as lightning
 " in defence, terrible in battle, the support of mighty armies, the
 " the hand of liberality, the all-protecting, the performer of most
 " mighty deeds, Art, the son of Con, the son of Feilim, the son
 " Tuathal, &c. arose. Warrior-like was his anger, powerful
 " his voice, lovely the champion; his flaxen hair plaited, his shirt
 " of filk, &c. &c. In one hand he bears two bows, in the other
 " his javelin, and by his side his dreadful and irresistible sword."
 Eogan, the son of Olioll, and commander of the Munster troops,
 is also described armed going to battle; and we find, that fine
 filk was what was then worn instead of linen, by the great men of
 of Ireland. - This battle was the most bloody that had been
 known; and we may judge what the loss must be, by the number
 of princes that fell that day. Art, the monarch, was cut off by
 the hand of Lugha-Leagha, in revenge for the death of his father.
 Eogan was slain by the prince of Wales. His six brothers died
 by the swords of other heroes. The king of Conaught and most
 of his knights bravely met the same fate. In a word, it was so
 remarkably bloody, that, till the reception of Christianity, and
 for a long time after, many of our antiquaries dated a new æra
 from it!

History scarce furnishes a more unnatural war than this we
 have recited. Mac Con dethroning his uncle and fighting against
 his brothers (for Olioll married his mother soon after his father's
 decease). Lugha quitting the party of his brother Olioll, to
 fight for his nephew; and, to add to the disgrace of these times,
 the brothers of Con killing their two nephews, by which means
 Art got the title of Aon-Fhir, or the Solitary, having no brother
 left living. But Art banished them from Tara, and they retired

* Catha Muigh-Muicruimhe.

to the court of Leinster, where they were hospitably received; A.C. and gave rise to many noble families.

During the reign of Art it was, that the eldest Carbre, the son of Conaire, called Riada, or of the Long Arm, on account of his settlements so remote from each other, as Kerry and Antrim, or the *Route* as it is called, passed over to Scotland; where, as Bede tells us *, “ By force or friendship, he procured settlements for “ himself.” From this leader, Riada, says he, their posterity are to this day called Dal-Reudimh, Dal in their language, signifying a part.

This is certainly the first regular Scottish or Irish settlement in Albany; not but that numbers of Irish must, from the close affinity between them and the Picts, have resided there from time to time, for centuries before; but still without forming themselves into a regular independent community. This is a fact in which all our writers are unanimous; and to such as can harbour the smallest doubt on this matter, I refer them (besides our ancient annals) to the authorities at bottom †.

We have observed that Olioll, king of Munster, lost seven of his sons, in the battle of Muicruimhe. For this great loss he remained in a manner inconsolable; but his greatest affliction was for his eldest son, his Righ-Damhna, or presumptive heir, as he called him; and now finding the hour of death approach, he made his last will, in which he left to his second son Cormoc, his crown during life; and as a farther proof of his opinion of his courage and virtue, he bequeathed him also *his sword, his shield, his spear, and his armour*. Eogan the eldest, left issue, a son, but who was

* Hist. Eccles. Brit. lib. i. cap. i.

† Routh's Hibernia Resurgens, Usher's Primord. Eccles. Britan. Ward's Vita Sti Rumoldi, Colgan's Act. Sanct. Hibern. & Trias Thaum. Grat. Lucius, O'Flaherty's Ogygia—Ogygia defended—O'Kennedie's Chronology of the Stuart line, Mac Geoghegan's Histoire d'Irlande, &c. &c.

A.C. not born till some months after the battle of Muicruimhe, who was called Fiacadh-Muilleathan. Olioll therefore ordered that on the demise of Cormoc, the crown should revert to Fiacadh; and that it should for ever after continue in alternate succession between the issue of these two great houses. He gives them his benediction, and assures them, that whilst they and their posterity religiously adhere to this bequest, they will continue a mighty and a powerful race, the delight of their friends, and the terror of their enemies! This Olioll got the epithet Olum; and the reason assigned is this—being of a very amorous disposition, he once attempted violence on a young lady named Aithne; but she, enraged at his insolence, took off a piece of his ear. Hence he was surnamed Olom, from O, an ear, and Lom, naked.

The issue of these two great houses, are, to this day, distinguished into Eoganachts, or the posterity of this Eogan; and Dal Cassians, from this Cormoc who was called Cas, or the Beloved. From the first are descended the following amongst many other great families—the Mac Carthies, O'Callaghans, O'Sullivans, O'Kieffes, O'Donochoes, O'Mahonies, O'Connells, O'Donovan's, Mac Auliffe, O'Line, &c. &c. as from Cormoc are traced the O'Briens, Mac Mahons, Mac Namaras, O'Kennedies, Mac Clanchies, Mac Cochlins, O'Hiffernans, &c. &c. From Cian, the third son of this Olioll, are descended the O'Carrolls, princes of Eli, O'Rierdans, O'Flanagans, O'Fogertys, O'Haras, O'Mara, O'Machair, O'Casey, &c. &c. besides we find that the posterity of Cian extended their patrimonies, both in Leinster and Conaught, and were the source of many other great families. But though Olioll decreed, that the succession to the crown of Munster should continue in the issue of his two eldest sons *only*, and that in alternate succession, yet he disposed of the country so as always to preserve a kind of equality between them. To the posterity of Eogan he bequeathed Desmond, (Deas-Muimhean)

or

or South Munster, comprehending the counties of Waterford, Cork, and Kerry ; to Cormoc, Thomond (Tuath-Muimhean), including the counties of Clare, Limeric, and the country about Cashil, extending to Sliabh-Blama, in Offory. To Cian, his youngest son, he left (Shior-Muimhean) Ormond, or East Munster, but still as a fee under his brother Cormoc. By this means, when the crown of Leath-Mogha came to the issue of Eogan, the other family were kings of North Munster only ; and when these last succeeded, the other family were kings only of South Munster, Leath-Mogha, including the command of the entire province.

The distresses and confusions occasioned by this revolution in favour of Mac Con, will well explain, why Severus extended the Roman arms in Britain ; and why, without much interruption, he was enabled to build a new wall to protect his frontiers from the invasions of the Picts and Irish.

B O O K VI.

C H A P. I.

Lughaidh proclaimed monarch—Cormoc Cas succeeds to the crown of Munster—his exploits in Britain and Ireland, and his liberality to the bards—principal families of the Clana Ith, or Irish Brigantes—Cormoc forms a party to gain the monarchy—Lughaidh killed; and Cormoc disappointed in his schemes by Feargus—raises a very large army, and attacks and defeats the imperialists in the battle of Criona—exploits of Lugha, and death of Feargus.

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LUGHAIDH, called Mac Con, the son of Mac Niad, of the race of Ith, from being deprived of his principality, expelled Munster, and banished the kingdom by the estates of Tara, we now behold placed on the pinnacle of glory, and dictating laws to that country, which some years before had proscribed himself! A proof, amongst a thousand others that could be produced, how little laws and justice avail, when opposed to power and oppression! What exploits he performed, after being proclaimed monarch, are not particularly related: it is however mentioned in the third book of Lecan, that he extended his power greatly over Gall and Scotland. Certain it is, that many illustrious houses in North Britain trace their pedigrees from him, and from his son; as the Campbells, who to this day are
I called

called in the Erse, or Highland Irish, Clana Mhio Cuin, or the posterity of Mac Con, the Mac Allens, &c. A.C.

Cormoc Cas succeeded his father in the government of Leath-Mogha, or Southern Ireland. The actions of this prince are greatly extolled in the Book of Munster. He married Samhair, daughter to the celebrated general Fion, the son of Cumhal; and was the first prince of his house who established a regular chief rent, to be paid in to himself and successors, every first of November. It is not improbable but that Fion, who was a great legislator, as well as warrior, might have directed this measure. Besides this, he obliged the Lagenians to pay the Eric ui Dresgoil. They called in to their assistance the Welsh; and he defeated their combined forces in four different pitched battles. Not satisfied with this, and probably to be revenged on the Britons for the support they gave to Mac Con; and for the death of his seven brothers, slain at Muicruimhe, he invaded Wales with his fleets no less than thirty different times, and brought from it each time most valuable spoils. He was victorious in the battle of Cruachan, fought against the Conacians; in the battle of Tara, against Fioncha, the son of Lucha. With like success he engaged the Fionna Eirion at Tailtean; and he defeated the Martini of Munster, (a branch of the Damnonii), in the battle of Samhna; in which fight he slew with his own hand the king of Ulster, who came to their assistance, but was himself so desperately wounded, that he never recovered it. The issue of Cormoc were Moghcorb, Aoife, and Eadhoin; but not by Saimhair, but a Danish princess, says the Psalter of Cashill. This venerable piece of antiquity also highly extols the liberality of this prince, insomuch that he has been known to bestow 300 ounces of silver in a day to his bards and literati.

Once for all let me observe, that the house of Ith were not Milesians, but Gadelians, and of the same race with the British

Brigantes ; for Ith was the son of Breogan, and brother to Milesius. The principal families from this illustrious line are, first, O'Driscoll, chief of the entire Corca-Luighe, (the present county of Cork), so called from Lughaidh, the son of Ith, on whom it was bestowed by Heber-Fionn, immediately after the conquest of the kingdom ; O'Leary, O'Baire, Mac Crothan, Mac Craith, O'Cowig, O'Flan-arda, O'Deada, O'Hea, O'Kerwic, O'Keily, O'Ciarain, O'Breogan, &c.

Mr. O'Flaherty allows to Mac Con but a reign of three years ; but in this, as well as in many other instances of chronology, he opposes the voice of truth and antiquity ; for nothing is more certain, than that both his successor Cormoc, as well as his contemporary Fiacha Muilleathan, king of Leath-Mogha, were in their mothers' wombs at the battle of Muicruimhe : so that at this calculation Cormoc must have been called to the throne at four years old ; and that in a country where no one was capable of filling any public office till after twenty-five ; but this learned gentleman, having taken off above 200 years from the antiquities of his country, was necessitated in this, and other instances, to curtail the reigns of many of our princes ; however the present was too gross a mistake to pass by. The learned author, aware of what is asserted in the Catha Muicruimhe, of the birth of Cormoc, asserts that he was not the son of Eoithne, and that he was begot long before this period. But if the reign of Mac Con did not exceed three years, and that of his successor but one year more, how shall we reconcile this to Cormoc's soliciting the support of Tiege, the son of Cian, the youngest son to Olioll-Olum ? We know that in Ireland no prince, or even lord of a country, could succeed to the inheritance of the family till twenty-five ; and this is the reason why the uncle, or next in kin to the deceased, precluded the immediate heir from the inheritance, if a minor. Olioll did not die for some years after the battle of

Mui-

Muicruimhe ; and of his nineteen sons, Cian, the father of Tiege, was the youngest ; so that the anachronism and the absurdity of his assertion becomes glaring. Add to this, *that the Book of Reigns*, Grat Lucius, Keating, Bruodinus, and all our annalists, are unanimous that Mac Con ruled Ireland for thirty, instead of three years, and we see how agreeable to reason as well as history.

The son of Art, bred up in the school of adversity, the sure feat of wisdom, to the ambition of filling the throne of his ancestors, had the more laudable one of wishing to merit it. From the literati he informed himself of every thing necessary to form the gentleman and the scholar. Under the Druids he studied the religion of his ancestors ; and so profoundly, as to become sensible of the absurdity and imposition of the whole. He studied the art of war under the great Goll Mac Morni ; and was so expert in the use of arms, that he was looked upon amongst the first heroes of Ireland in those days of chivalry. And having now passed the age of twenty-five (the age requisite to arrive at, in order to fill any public station), he solicited his friends, and the adherents of his house, to support his pretensions to the monarchy, in case of a vacancy. He paid a visit to his cousin Fiacha Muillcathan, king of Munster, at his palace of Rath-Naoi, near Cashill, now called Knoc-Raffin. There was something striking and similar in the cases of these two young princes. Fiacha was the son of Eogan, eldest son of Olioll-Olum ; and this Eogan, as well as Art, were killed side by side at the battle of Muicruimhe : it was within a few days of nine months after this battle, and on the same day, that these young princes came into the world ; so that Fiacha could not but interest himself deeply in the cause of this prince. Add to this, another stimulus, the desire of revenge, which it must be confessed, had but too great a weight in all the Irish councils. From Munster he goes to Conaught ;
and

A.C. and was soon assured of the support of that prince, and his celebrated military, or Clana Morni.

Mac Con was well informed of all these measures, and studied to circumvent them. After settling his affairs at Tara, he proceeded on a royal tour to Munster, to solicit the support of Leath-Mogha; but it does not appear that this journey was attended with all the success he flattered himself with. On his return through Leinster to Tara, as he was one day distributing gold and silver from his chariot, in an open plain, to the poets, antiquaries, musicians, and all the adulatory tribe, (which it seems was a custom amongst the princes and great men of Ireland on certain days), an assassin (Comain Eigis) behind his back pierced his body with a spear, of which wound he instantly died, after a reign of thirty years.

What Posidonius says of the custom of distributing gold amongst the Celtæ, is remarkable; he tells us—"that Luernus, " a Celtic prince, throwing gold and silver from his chariot, as " was his custom, one of the Bards cried out—" that the ground " over which his chariot passed instantly produced gold and precious gifts, to enrich mankind." Our writers notice the power of Lughaidh in Gaul, where he remained for many years. Now this name is by us pronounced Lua, the *h* destroying the sound of the *g* and the *d*; and the word Ernus, or Erin, evidently denotes Ireland; so that there is something more than bare probability, that the Luernus of Posidonius was our very Lughaidh, surnamed Mac Con.

The estates are immediately convened to Tara, to elect a successor; and Cormoc publicly solicits the suffrages of the princes and of the nobility. To gain the princes of Ulster, he prepares for them a magnificent entertainment (for it appears that good eating and drinking was not without its influence in those days, any more than in the present times); but in the height of jollity

lity and good-humour, it was so contrived by Feargus, king of A.C. Ulster, who also aspired to the monarchy, that the beard and hair of Cormoc were set fire to, and he immediately retired in the highest consternation.

To explain this matter, it is necessary to remark, that not only every prince, but even every knight of Ireland, was obliged to be perfect in all his limbs, so that his very person might command respect. Their hair was a principal ornament to both. To cut off the hair of an adversary, was a mark of the highest contempt; nor dared he appear abroad with such a mark of infamy. Of this our annals furnish a striking instance in the case of Cucullin, a champion of the Craobh-ruadh, antecedent to Christianity. He and the famous Conrigh Mac Daire, chief of the knights of Munster, having a violent contest about a fair captive, agreed to decide it by the sword. They met at the place of appointment; and Conrigh proving the victor, as a mark of greater reproach to his antagonist, who had broke his word to him, he cut off his hair. In this situation Cucullin remained hid from the world for near twelve months, at which time he recovered his hair. Thus, in the present case, by this piece of refined policy, Cormoc was disabled from appearing as a candidate on the day of election, and Feargus was chosen monarch, having no competitor.

Feargus, the great-grandson of Fiathach, from whom this 253 branch of the Heremonians were called Dal-Fiatachs, of the same line with the Deaghaidhs of Munster, was proclaimed monarch. We have observed in the reign of Conaire II. that by his address he had Ogaman, grandfather to this present emperor, elected king of Ulster, in exclusion of the house of Ir; and by this means got the patrimony of his ancestors about Loch-Erne restored, and the present county of Antrim conferred

A.C. ferred on his son Carbre, or Eochaidh, called Rida, which name he gave to this place, and which it retains at this day, under the contracted name of the Route.

As soon as Cormoc had by time repaired the above disgrace, he solicited all his friends in his cause. He reminded his cousin Fiacha of his promise, whom he found ready to fulfill it. He waited on Tiege, the son of Cian, the son of Olioll-Olum, on whom, by will, Olioll had left large possessions in Ely and Ormond; and from whom all the Milesian families of that country are descended. As Tiege was an able general, and had always a select body of resolute troops ready on any emergency, the better to secure him to his interest, he appointed him his commander in chief; and besides promised him large possessions in Leinster, in case of success. To insure this, Tiege applies to his grand-uncle, the famous Lugha-Leagha, yet alive, the most intrepid champion of those days, to assist Cormoc on this occasion. He represented to him, that through his means this young prince was reduced to his present humiliating state, (he having killed his father Art at the battle of Muicruimhe); and that as some atonement for this injury, he should now support him. This Luagha not only promised, but vowed to cut off the head of his adversary Feargus, in revenge for the death of his nephew Cian, slain by him in the battle of Samhna, some time before.

At the head of a very powerful army (composed, it is said, of 50,000 men, under thirty princes, and fifty great chieftains), Cormoc invades Leinster; nor was Feargus behind hand in his preparations to receive him. We have yet extant the relation of this bloody and decisive battle, called Catha-Criona, or the battle of Criona, in Meath, where it was fought. The engagement was fierce and bloody; but whilst the heroes and knights on both sides were engaged hand to hand, Lugha only looked for enemies worthy his sword and his courage. He first engaged in
single

single combat, Feargus, called Folt-Eabhair, or of the Long Hair, brother to the reigning monarch, whom he slew, and then cut off his head. His next brother, called also Feargus, surnamed Chaisfhiachlach, or of the Crooked Teeth, advanced to meet our hero, and soon shared the same fate. He now eagerly fought the monarch himself, whom he knew by his standard, engaged and killed him also. The Ultonians and their allies still obstinately maintained the fight; and though obliged to give way to the superior discipline of their antagonists, yet rallied seven different times; nor was the fate of the day certain, till the gallant Tieve himself, at the head of a select body of troops, who had not yet engaged, rushed into the battle; by which means they were completely broke, and their scattered remains were pursued for many miles. Tieve himself was grievously wounded, and obliged to be carried in his chariot to Tara, where he languished for a long time in great misery, the surgeons there not affording him any relief. There was a famous medical university at this time in Munster, and thither Tieve sent for the celebrated professor Finighin, called Feath-glic, or the Learned and Dexterous, and his three Daltadhs, or eleves, who soon relieved and cured him. There is yet extant, in the Book of Lecan, a poem in praise of the superior abilities of this surgeon, and of his eleves, to those of all his contemporaries.

C H A P. II.

Cormoc proclaimed monarch—remarkable dream of Cormoc's mother—makes some reformatiions in the national code, &c. in a convention of the states at Tara—enlarges the palace of Tara, &c.—the splendour of his court—founds new academies at Tara—revenges the murder of the vestals at Tara, and imposes an annual tribute on the Lagenians—ravages the coasts of Britain and Gaul—his son slain in his presence by Aongus; whom he obliges to fly, and is protected by the king of Leath-Mogha: against whom Cormoc wages war, but is defeated.

254 **T**HE victorious Cormoc claims the throne of Ireland as his due by succession and by conquest, and is accordingly proclaimed monarch with great pomp. He was the son of Art, the son of Con, the son of Feidhlimidh, the son of Tuathal, the son of Fiachadh, the son of Fearaidhach, the son of Criomthan, (all monarchs of Ireland), of the race of Heremon. His first act was a donation of lands in Leinster to his general Tiege; and from this branch of the line of Heber arose many great families in Leinster and Conaught, as O'Hara, O'Gara, O'Connor, Kineachta, &c.

There is a passage related in the Catha-Muicruimhe, which I think should not be passed by unnoticed. Joseph * relates his dreams to his brethren; and he explains those of Pharaoh's servants †, as well as those of Pharaoh himself ‡. Grave writers have not forgot the dream of Calphurnia, the night previous to the murder of Cæsar; and Artimidorus makes Apollo himself the patron of dreams—by the bye, no very honourable employ

* Genesis, chap. xxxvii.

+ Ibid. chap. xl.

‡ Ibid. chap. xli.

for

for the God of *wit* and *day*. In Ireland the explanation of A.C. dreams was a part of Druid theology. The night before this fatal battle, the mother of Cormoc, who we must suppose was not much composed, awoke in great terror; which Art perceiving, insisted upon knowing the cause, observing, that if it was a dream that boded ill to him, it was properer that he himself should know it, than others. “Methought, (said she), my head was taken off, and from my neck sprung up a large tree, whose extended branches covered the kingdom. This tree was destroyed by a swelling sea; but from its roots arose another, larger, and more flourishing than the former, which was withered by the blasts of a westerly wind.” Art, who was versed in the mysteries of the Druids, explained the dream thus:—“Your head being cut off, (says he) denotes my death at the battle to-morrow; for the head of every woman is her husband. The tree that arose from your neck imports that you will bear a son for me after my death, who will arrive at great power and dignity, and rule Ireland: this tree’s being carried away by the sea, signifies the loss of his life through the means of that element. The second tree, proceeding from the roots of the former, and still more flourishing, foretells a successor to him, who will arrive at still greater power; but the tree’s being destroyed by a westerly wind, declares he will fall by the hands of the Fiana-Eirion. But they themselves will be also destroyed in that battle, never after to arise!”

It is pretty remarkable that this prediction was fulfilled in every part. Art [next morning, singled out by Lugha-Leaga, had his head taken off by this champion. His son Cormoc, as we have seen, after struggling with many difficulties, arrived at the monarchy, and lost his life by the bone of a salmon crossing the œsophagus, whilst at dinner.—His son Carbre was also monarch of Ireland, and lost his life in the battle of Gabhra,

A.C. at which time his opponents the Fiana-Eirion were also totally cut off.

Cormoc, now in peaceable possession of the throne, had every opportunity of displaying his great abilities. The greatest princes of ancient Ireland began their reformatations in the state with the literati. He convened the states at Tara, where every necessary alteration and amendment, found wanting in the national code, was made. The history and antiquities of the kingdom underwent a severe scrutiny; and the chief Druids were directed to examine the state of religion. Hence in old writings we find him proclaimed, “Budh righ, budh phaidh, budh file: budh e
“cean a caoimh-fine: i. e. He was the king, the divine, and
“the philosopher: he was the noble chief of the military.”

The palace of Tara he enlarged; and Miodh-Cuarta, where the king and estates met, and where foreign ambassadors were received and entertained, he highly decorated.—On his sideboard, on public festivals, were displayed 150 cups of massy gold and silver; 150 of the Clana-Morni, or Conaught knights, constantly attended on his person; and 1050 soldiers mounted guard every day on all the approaches to the palace, which were five, to point out to the public with greater dignity where the monarch resided. Besides his state bed, were 150 beds in the apartments of the palace *only*, to lodge such as were in immediate attendance. An open table was constantly kept for 1500 persons; and he regulated the great officers of his court, and determined their number, which was invariably continued to the dissolution of the monarchy in the twelfth century: these were first, a prince of the blood for a companion; secondly, a chief judge to consult in all critical cases; thirdly, a chief Druid, to direct his conscience; fourthly, a chief physician, to superintend his health; fifthly, an antiquarian, to consult in points of history and chronology; sixthly, a poet, to rehearse his praises, and those of his
ancestors;

ancestors; seventhly, a chief musician with his band, in times of relaxation; and three stewards of his household, to see the contributions from the different provinces paid in, and to superintend the œconomy of his household. He also added three new foundations to these already established at Tara.—The first, a military academy, for instructing the young nobility in feats of arms; the second, an historic one, where Ollamhs, or doctors in history, assembled from time to time, to examine the public records; and the third, an academy for lawyers to meet in, to superintend, explain, and make law and justice compatible—an object much to be wished for at this day. Of all these regulations, and of the magnificence of Cormoc and of his court, we have yet preserved a poem of old Duvegan's of 183 verses, beginning with—"Teamhair na riogh, "rath Cormoc: i. e. Royal Tara, the palace of Cormoc."

It has been asserted, that from the historic academy of Cormoc, the Psalter of Tara took its rise. It is however an error. This great work was begun in the days of Ollamh-Fodhla, and continued regularly from age to age; but always revised and examined with uncommon attention, in the most brilliant periods of our history. It is certain, that in the present reign, the preceding monarchs of Ireland were synchronized with these of other ancient countries, as the Assyrian, Ægyptian, Jewish, and Roman emperors, examples of which, taken from this Psalter, may be seen in the first book of Lecan.

But internal reformation, and attention to the fine arts, were but a part of the views of Cormoc. He well knew that foreign wars could only be successful, by establishing domestic tranquillity. In times of Paganism, we find in Ireland females devoted to celibacy. There was in Tara a royal foundation of this kind, wherein none were admitted but virgins of the noblest blood. It was called Cluain-Feart, or the place of retirement till death, from Cluan and Feart, a grave; as they never quitted the precincts of the

A.C. the house, from their first reception.—The duty of these virgins, was, to keep up constantly the fires of Bel, or the sun, and of Samhain, or the moon, which customs they borrowed from their Phœnician ancestors. During the contests between Cormoc and Feargus, Dunling, the son of Endeus, with a number of wretches equally abandoned, broke into this retreat, where were thirty profest vestals; and not being able to violate them, basely put them all to the sword. This sacrilege of the Lagenian prince, gave great scandal to the kingdom, which Cormoc severely punished, by putting him to the sword, with twelve of his principal associates. He also, during his life, obliged their successors to send to Tara, every year, thirty white cows, with calves of the same colour. Thirty brass collars for these cows, and thirty chains of the same metal, to keep them quiet whilst milking. This object gained, he fitted out a very large navy, with which for three years he scoured the coasts of Britain and Gaul, making descents from time to time, raising contributions, and encouraging the natives to unite against Rome. What farther designs he might have formed, we are not told; but we soon find that intestine commotions demanded all his power and authority to be exerted at home.

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About this period, one of Cormoc's favourites, a person of great authority, fell under the displeasure of the monarch, for what crime we are not informed. Great interest and application was made to have him restored to his master's favour, but without success. At length Aongus, one of the sons of Fiachadh Suidhe, brother to Con, grandfather to the present monarch, became an intercessor. This Con had two brothers, the above Fiachadh, and Eochadh-Fion. Fiachadh had large possessions about Tara, known by the name of Deasie-Tamharach, to which his sons, Aongus, Rosa, and Eogan succeeded. Eochaidh acquired large possessions in Leinster. But to return—Through the influence of
Aongus,

A.C.
Aongus, the culprit's pardon was procured; he was admitted into the monarch's presence, and well received. But Ceallach, a son of Cormoc's, who had a particular enmity to this person, on his return from court, had him seized, and his eyes put out, notwithstanding the pardon granted—Aongus enraged at this act of perfidy, with a body of select friends, suddenly marched to Tara, upbraids the young prince for his inhumanity and baseness, and in the presence of Cormoc killed him.

The monarch highly enraged raises a mighty army, vowing vengeance on Aongus, and on his family. He attacks and defeats his forces, and compels them all to fly Tara. They apply to the king of Leinster for refuge, which he dared not grant. They then retire to Ossory; but this was still too near Tara. They then wait on Fiacha, king of Leath-Mogha, who receives them with great humanity, and assigns them lands in the county of Waterford, which, from their former possessions, ever after went by the name of the Deasies. The O'Fealans, the posterity of these princes, were lords of this country till the landing of Henry II. when they were dispossessed by the Le Poers, or Powers.

To protect the murderers of his son, was in fact to wage war with the monarch. Cormoc collected all the forces of Leath-Cuin to engage the Mamonians. His family was very numerous; he had two sons besides the deceased, and ten daughters. The splendor of his court far exceeding any thing seen before in Ireland, and the expences of these children and their retinues put him under great necessity; he therefore gladly embraced this opportunity to oblige the Mamonians to pay him contributions. By the partition treaty between Heber and Heremon, and by the latter one between Con and Eogan, king of Munster, as well as one of a later date, between the said Con and Mac Neid, the successor to Eogan, the absolute independency of Leath-Mogha was

A.C. was acknowledged in the fullest manner. Princes never want pretences to enforce what they desire. The people of Leath-Cuin no doubt thought it very hard that they only were obliged to pay tribute to the monarch, and readily came into his views. With a well-appointed army Cormoc suddenly invaded Munster, and reached as far as Druim-dabhaire, now Knoc-Long, in the county of Limerick, where he fixed his camp. The Mamonians were not in the mean time idle. Fiacha-Muilleathan collected all his troops, and formed his camp at some distance from that of the monarch. We are disgusted with the superstition of these times. Cormoc having a fine country behind him, cut off the supplies and provisions coming to the enemy's camp, and the weather being dry, water became very scarce amongst them. We are told that all these misfortunes proceeded from the incantations and magic spells of Cormoc's Druids; and that in this exigency, to supply his army and cattle with fresh water, Fiacha gave to a famous Druid, from Kerry, large possessions in the county of Cork. This he effected by causing deep pits to be cut in certain places, where plenty of water was found. In our own times people have been found, both in England and Ireland, who by close remarks could to a *certainty* direct where to dig for water. Such was this famous Druid Modharuith's prescience, and no more.

The Mamonian army now refreshed, attack the monarch in his entrenchments, and, after a gallant resistance, compel him to quit the field. The armies of the Irish never dispersed till their chiefs were slain. The imperial army rather retreat than fly; and it became a constant scene of contention between one part or another of the two armies, till they reached Ossory. Here Cormoc, closely pressed, was obliged to capitulate. By this agreement he engaged to make good to the people of Munster whatever losses they had suffered by this invasion; and for the performance of this covenant he gave as hostages some of his principal nobility. He also solemnly renounced for himself, and for his successors,

cessors, monarchs of Ireland, every pretence or demand whatever of chiefrie over the kings of Leath-Mogha, and he called on the sun, moon, and stars to attest it. Cormoc, sensibly mortified at this great disappointment to his schemes, vowed revenge on his former benefactor Fiacha, and gratified it, but in a very dishonourable manner.

Conla, the son of Tiege, his old general, was bred up at the court of Tara, and in great favour with the monarch. He was afflicted with a violent scurvy, which baffled the force of physic. Cormoc, who, as already observed, was deeply versed in Druidism, told him in great confidence, that after exerting his utmost knowlege, he found his disorder irremediable, unless he could wash himself all over in the blood of a king; and most probably privately pointed out to him who he was.—But be this as it may, Conla repairs to the court of Munster, where he was graciously received by his cousin Fiacha. One day, we are told, this prince bathing and Conla looking on, he recollected the prediction of Cormoc, and instantly launced his spear at him. The wound proved mortal, and the regicide was instantly seized; but the expiring prince had life enough left to order his people to spare and forgive the unhappy wretch. The story is told, as the mere effect of Druidism; but Cormoc who had sense enough to see into the imposture of this worship, and, if not a Theist, certainly died a Christian, I do suppose had also cunning enough to make it subservient to his own designs. This apology I thought necessary, as I have no authority for explaining this story in the manner I have, and so much to the dishonour of Cormoc.

A principal object of Irish history, was to commemorate the actions of great families, and to pursue them to their new settlements. This makes it necessary to give some account of Eochaidh-Fionn, grand-uncle to the present prince. His preceptor was Laighseach-Ceandmar, a descendant of the renowned Connal-

A.C. Cearnach, of the race of Ir. In the reign of his nephew Art, Cuchorb, king of Leinster, was reduced to great distresses by the Mamonians. He applies to Eochaidh, who was a powerful chief, for assistance, and he promises to Laighfeach, his Dalta, a large reward, provided he seconded his applications. Through the persuasions of this preceptor, Eochaidh raised a large army—the Leabhar-Lecan says, no less than seven Cathas, or 21,000 men—Laighfeach being also a MacFine, and himself a great warrior, attended the campaign. At Athtrodan, or Athy, the two armies engaged, and, after a bloody conflict, the Mamonians gave way—In crossing the Barrow they were again attacked by the Leinster troops, and here Eochaidh lost both a son and a grand-son. In Leix they sustained a third furious attack, and at Offory they were entirely broke. Cuchorb, now reinstated in his dominions, generously rewarded his new allies. On Eochaidh, and on his posterity he settled the seven Fothortuaths, from a surname of this prince so called, in the county of Wexford. The third book of Lecan is minute in its account of the descendants of this Eochaidh—from him proceeded the O'Duns, O'Locheins, and O'Comains—the O'Dermods, O'Meathus, O'Luighneach, &c. &c. O'Nuallans were the chiefs of this stock for many generations.

Laighfeach, who was general in this expedition, and to whose conduct and bravery the defeat of the Mamonians was in a great measure attributed, was rewarded with the country, after him called Leis, or the present Queen's County—He and his successors were by patent declared hereditary treasurers of Leinster; they were to be of the privy council, and to have the fourth seat next the king. Seven out of this line were always to be a part of the king's body-guards; but the chief of Leis was always to support 150 select men for the king, who were to have the honour of leading on every attack, and of forming the rear in every retreat. Of this sept, says the Book of Lecan, are the
 Clan

Clan Flanagain, Clan Eilge, (probably Echlins) &c. also O'Maol-
finan, O'Kinan, O'Ruadin; but the hereditary chief was
O'Moora.—O'Moore, of Ballyna, in the county of Kildare, is the
present representative of this most illustrious branch, of the line
of Ir; and the remarkable building near Maryborough, in the
Queen's County, vulgarly called Dunamase, was originally con-
structed by this hero, and from him called Dun ui Laighseach, or
the fortress of Laighseach.

The Annals of Tighernach tells us, that during the reign of
Cormoc, no less than thirty-six battles were fought. The distress
which the Munster invasion involved him in, compelled Cormoc
to have the Boreimhe-Laighean, or the Leinster tribute, paid in to
him; but this was not sufficient; new methods must be devised.
The grandson of his old ally, Connal Cruachan, succeeded to the
throne of Conaught. Him, on some pretence he put under the
ban of the empire, invaded his territories, and, after defeating
him in battle, deposed him, and in his place substituted his half-
brother Lugna. But he being some time after cut off by Aidhe,
Cormoc again enters Conaught with sword and fire, destroying
the Damnonii wherever to be found, and fixes Niamhor, brother
to the deceased, on the throne. Thus ended, except in two in-
stances more, the power of the Damnonii in Conaught, after
governing the entire kingdom for 195 years, and giving princes
to Conaught for no less a space than 1640 years. In this last in-
vasion of Conaught it must be that Cormoc lost an eye.

It is singular enough that Cormoc, notwithstanding the many
improvements he made in the police of Ireland; notwithstanding
his reducing Conaught into an Irish province, and transferring
in a manner the crown of it from the Damnonii to his own fa-
mily, &c. yet still, by the loss of an eye, though in the cause of
his country, he was judged unworthy of sovereign authority,
and obliged to make a surrender of the crown. His son too,

A.C. wanting a short time of that age which the Irish laws judged necessary for government, was on this occasion laid aside.—But it was not enough that an Irish monarch should be of the blood royal, of the equestrian order, and of proper age; he must also be perfect in all his corporal, as well as mental faculties, otherwise he was deemed unworthy rule. Yet, even in his private capacity, if we pursue him, we shall find Cormoc nobly support the dignity of the man, as he did, in his public one, that of the king.—In his retreat it was that he is said to have wrote, with his own hand a copy of the Psalter of Tara. He also supervised a Treatise on the Laws, and on the Obedience due to Princes, which was wrote by Fiatach. When his son Carbre was called to the throne, he wrote for his particular use, Teagarg Righ, or *Advice to a King*. It is by way of dialogue, in which he considers the duty of a king as a legislator, a soldier, a statesman, and a scholar; he treats of the laws of poets, philosophers, antiquarians, and Druids. This work has been preserved entire in O'Duvedan's book, a copy of which I have.

Besides this attention to letters in general, he devoted a considerable portion of time every day to the study of divinity. Aided by the light of reason, and assisted by some pious Christians—for there is no doubt, as we shall shew, but that Christianity made some progress in Ireland before his time—he soon became convinced of the absurdity of Druidism, and disclaimed it. That he died a Christian we are furnished with two strong proofs: first, though he was choaked by the bone of a salmon sticking across the œsophagus, which could not be pushed either up or down, yet he made it a dying request not to be interred in Roilich na Riogh, the royal sepulchre, as he wished not that his ashes should mix with those of his heathen ancestors: secondly, the place of his interment was, near three centuries after, sought for and found out by St. Columba, who said 30 masses over it, and a chapel

chapel was soon after erected there. It were absurd to suppose that this renowned apostle of the Picts, and of his own blood, would celebrate masses for the soul of Cormoc, if it was not well known that he died a Christian. Most moderns affirm that the second wife of Fion Mac Cubhal was a daughter of Cormoc. This seems a manifest anachronism; Fion was appointed to the generalship of the militia by Eogan, A.C. 173; his daughter married Cormoc, grandson to Eogan; so that Fion was a very old man in the reign of Cormoc; and had a connection so close subsisted, it would be hard to account for his son and grandson's uniting with Munster against the son of this Cormoc, as we shall see.

C H A P. III.

Eochaidh Gonnadh elected monarch—succeeded by Carbre Liffe-chaire—assists Carausius against the Romans in Britain—is defeated by the Lagenians—account of the origin and constitution of the Leinster hereditary militia, destroyed in this reign.

ON the abdication of Cormoc the estates met to choose a successor; and the majority of voices were declared to be in favour of Eochadh Gonnadh, grandson to the monarch Feargus, of the Dal Fiatach race, and line of Heremon, who was slain after a short reign of one year. 278

Carbre, the son of the deposed monarch Cormoc, having now attained his twenty-fifth year, was unanimously elected monarch. 279 As his father got the epithet Folt-Fhada, or of the Long Hair, to commemorate his first disappointment, so the son was called Liffechaire, being nursed near the banks of the Liffey. A story is

A.C. is related, which, as it originated from the present prince, though it happened in the reign of his father, we shall introduce it here; the more so, as it conveys useful instruction.

Amongst the number of learned and illustrious personages, which graced the court of Cormoc was his chief justice, by name Fiothill. Deeply versed in the ways of men and kings, on his dying bed he gave a particular charge to his eldest son and successor Flaithrighe, and on whom he had bestowed a most liberal education, carefully to observe the four following maxims.—First, never to undertake the tuition of the son of a king: secondly, never to communicate a secret of importance to a woman: thirdly, not to be instrumental in advancing a person of low birth and education, to an exalted station: and fourthly, not to entrust the management of his affairs, or the keeping his money, to a sister.

The young lawyer, though he much revered his father, was resolved to put all these maxims to a trial. He therefore undertook to educate the young Carbre, notwithstanding his father's injunctions to the contrary. When about four years old, Flaithrighe had the child conveyed in the most private manner to a wood, by one of his fosterers, there to be concealed, till he sent a certain token agreed on, when, and not before, the child was to be produced. Having thus provided for the child's security, he returned home exceedingly dejected, which his wife perceiving, requested to know the cause. His evasive answers rather inflamed her curiosity, and she became more importunate. He seemed to relent; and after binding her to the most solemn secrecy, he told her, that he had the misfortune to kill his royal pupil. The poor woman big with this secret, waited the first opportunity of displaying her prudence and discretion. Some altercation arose between them a little time after. She charges him highly with
this

this crime, had him bound by his own servants, and delivered up to the proper judges. He had already by his interest, promoted the son of a rustic to an honourable employ; and on the death of his father, entrusted his sister with considerable sums of money. A.C.

The death of the young prince being proved by the depositions of his wife; he was condemned to die. He now solicits the interest of his upstart dependent; but he, like the modern Americans, sought only how to destroy the fostering hand that protected and raised him, as his existence served only as a constant memento of the meanness of his own extraction, and of his dependence. Thus disappointed, he applies to his sister for a sum of money, to raise friends amongst the courtiers; but she having an husband in view, denied the having any property of his in her hands, and refused him the smallest supply. Thus circumstanced, he desires to be brought before the monarch, had the child produced in perfect health; and explained to Cormoc, the injunctions which his dying father laid on him, and the means he used to examine the truth of them.

This prince Carbre seemed to inherit all the virtues of his father; like him, had the history and antiquities of his country carefully revised, and like him made great reforms in the laws, and even wrote himself, rules for decisions in certain difficult cases, which from their precision, accuracy, and justice, got the title of Breithe-Nimhe, or celestial judgments! But circumscribed in his power, as the Irish monarchs were, and governing a warlike, factious, and free people, whatever great designs he might have formed, could only be supported by the suffrages of chiefs, who had their own passions, interests, and inclinations to gratify. Such as it was, we find he used it to the best purposes. Thus Carausius, a citizen of Menassia (placed by some in Germany; but

A.C. but by the opinions of Usher * and Camden † in Ireland, Wexford town being so called by Ptolemy, the geographer ; and it is so explained in the notes upon the geographer Dionysius), an intrepid soldier, and highly versed in maritime affairs, had raised himself by his exploits so much in the confidence of the emperors Diocletian and Maximian, that he was appointed to protect the Gallic and Belgic coasts from the invasions and incursions of the Saxons and their allies. But in this employ, he consulted more his own interest than that of his employers ; whatever spoils he recovered from the enemy, reserving to himself, instead of restoring them to the injured proprietors. On repeated complaints of his depredations on the people he was appointed to protect, he was declared an enemy to the empire, and judged worth of death. On this he retires to Britain, bids defiance to the Roman arms, and, by his affability and generosity, so far gained on the affections of the people, as to assume the purple. Here he justified the character given of him by Eutropius, of being *vir, rei militaris expertissimus*, defeating the Roman armies sent against him, and calling in, say Roman writers, troops of Germans to his assistance. But it is clear that these auxiliaries must be from his own country, which we have shewn was Ireland ; and should farther doubts arise on this head, his very name becomes an additional proof of it ; being, like the epithet given to all our Irish heroes, expressive of his excellence—Carausius, from Curadh, (pronounced Cura), an hero, Uas, noble, and Cios, tribute ; all which united pronounce Curasios, the other letters being mortified. We may therefore rest assured, that an enterprising prince like Carbre, gave to Curasios every assistance in his power ; and it had this effect ; that the Ro-

* Premord. Eccles. Britan. p. 585.

† Britannia, under the title of Ireland.

mans were satisfied to let him peaceably enjoy his usurped power, rather than, by pushing things too far, to hazard the entire loss of Britain. Yet we see, they waited impatiently to cut him off; which was at length effected by Alectus, who killed him some years after. A.C.

Besides these auxiliaries sent to Britain, Carbre had many wars to sustain at home. To enforce the Leinster tribute, he invaded that province with a large army. The Lagenians met him at Cnamhrois, where a bloody battle was fought. Carbre was defeated with the loss of three of his sons, and 9000 chosen men. The Lagenian poets highly boast of this victory. In his reign Eadh, the son of Garadh, and the last of the Danaan race, succeeded Niamhor, in the crown of Conaught; after which it became the property of the posterity of Carbre.

As it was in this reign that the famous Fine-Eirion, or hereditary militia of Leinster were destroyed, it becomes necessary to explain the nature of this most formidable corps. From the remotest antiquity we have seen the military order distinguished in Ireland; codes of military laws and discipline established, and their dress and rank in the state ascertained. The learned Keating and others tell us, that these militia were called Fine, from Fion Mac Cubhal, but it is certainly a great error; the word Fine, strictly implying a military corps. It is on this account, that in the MSS. long before the present æra, we find the word Fine applied to any body of soldiery—thus we read of the Fine-Fomhar-aig, or African legions, the Fine Gall, or foreign troops, &c. Add to this, that in the Feis Tighe Canain, a very old MS. now before me, Conan puts the following question to Fion Mac Cubhal, from whom it has been asserted that these troops took their name: “Ca hait an dearnadh an D’ord Fian, ar ttuis an Eirin? i. e. at what time was the military order first instituted in Ireland?” and he answers, in the time of the Danaans.

A.C. On the partition of the island between Heber and Heremon, the different orders of people, who attended them from Spain, were also divided; and the lands assigned to the military, were on condition of each chief's supporting a stipulated number of armed troops, to attend the prince when called on. The land thus disposed of, was called Fearan an Cloidheamh, or sword-land. Behold then the origin of military tenures in Europe, and their antiquity, in opposition to modern writers!

These troops were divided into legions, called Catha. Each Cath, battle, or legion, contained 3000 men, officers included. Every 1000 of these was commanded by a colonel, called Fear Comhlan Mile, or the commander of 1000, who had under him ten captains, twenty lieutenants, and forty serjeants. The captain was called Fear Comhlan Cead, or the commander of 100; the lieutenant, Fear Comhlan Caoguid, or the commander of fifty; and so on. The commander of the legion was named Taoiseach an Catha, or governor of the legion. To each Cath or legion, was appointed a proper number of physicians and surgeons, and these were the most eminent of the different universities in the kingdom. What opinion the public held their abilities in, we may infer from the common and well known adage, used *even to this day*, to express the situation of an incurable—"Ni Thogfiodh Leagha na bhfion e: i. e. the physicians "of the army could not raise him!" We likewise find that each Cath had a band of music attendant on it, as well as a number of poets, to rehearse their deeds and excite them to feats of glory. Thus in the battle of Ventry, when Oisín is hard set in single combat, the poet Feargus animates him aloud, and he kills his adversary.

None were admitted into these legions but people of large stature, without the least deformity in their limbs—they must be scholars, and informed in poetry and history. They must be perfect

perfect in the use of arms, particularly the sword, the javelin, and sling; and give proofs of their dexterity, as well for offence as defence. Each soldier must be endowed with that activity, as to clear at once any wall as high as himself, and to run under the branch of a tree, as low as his knee. He was bound singly not to fly from nine armed men; and as these military were the children of the state, and that it required great interest to become of this body, another charge was, that before enrolling, the parents and friends of each candidate were to swear, not to revenge his death in case he should be slain, but to leave the whole to the general.

The number of these legions are by Keating and other antiquarians determined to be, in times of peace, but three, or 9000 men; but in case of foreign invasions, they were to be augmented to seven legions, or 21,000. This is undoubtedly a very great mistake. For every provincial king had his Fine, or regular military corps, and these were seldom less than seven Cathas, or legions; and this explains, what the Psalter of Cashill means, by the Fine-Laighean, or Leinster troops, the Fine-Muimhian, or Munster ones, &c. Add to this, that when Fion refused marching his legions to the assistance of Art, the father of Cormoc, he called in to his assistance the Clana Morni, or Conaught forces. From this account, the standing forces of each province was 21,000 fighting men; so that the national land forces, if united, (which was seldom the case) were equal to 100,000 men; that is, 84,000 for the four provinces, and the remainder for the territory about Tara, or the imperial domain. The chief commander of each provincial army was called Righ-Fhine, or king of the soldiery, and to him they swore fidelity and obedience. The marshal or general in chief was named Tuargna-Catha; and their pay was made out in cloaths, money, and provisions, as had been established by the monarch Seadhna, about seven centuries before

A.C. Christ. From November to May they were quartered on the country, each house supplying a soldier, with certain necessaries; and this is the meaning of "Buana gacha Tighe, o Samhuin go "Bealtuine." From May to November they were ordered to the different Duns, or stations, to preserve internal peace, and to give proper notice should a foreign enemy approach. In the Catha Fiontragha, many of these stations are pointed out, and the names of the leaders under Fion Mac Cumhal, who then commanded these garrisons. We find one established at the Sceligs, one at Dun, one in the Bay of Trale, one at the mouth of the Casin, (all in the county of Kerry), one at Inis Catha, or Scatterry, some in the county of Limeric, &c. Rath-Conan, in this county, still retains the name of its governor in these days, to wit, the famous Conan-Maol. Such soldiers as were not on particular duty or service, were employed in great hunting matches; where the chase preserved them in health and vigour, and supplied part of their wants; the red deer, then so numerous in the mountains, being very large, fleet, and fierce. We have yet extant relations of some of these famous hunts about Killarney. A part of these troops were constantly on service, either in Scotland, to oppose the Romans (hence our Fine Albin, or Albanian legions); or on some continental invasion. From the landing of Cæsar in Britain, to its dereliction by the Romans, there was an Irish military force, constantly kept up in Albin, or Scotland; and it is for this reason we find, that Cumhal, the father of Fion, as well as Fion himself, and his grandson Osgur, are each called in many old MSS. Righ Fine Eirin and Albin, or Chiefs of the Military of Ireland and Scotland.

I apprehend that neither ancient or modern history can furnish a more wise and formidable military institution than this. Men arrived at the highest degree of military discipline, at the very instant of their reception into the army! Not only expert
at

at annoying, but equally so in defending themselves from the attacks of an enemy. Not only animated to the fight by their natural courage, but raised higher by the sound of music; and, when necessary, worked up to a perfect enthusiasm by the songs of the bards! In fine the most celebrated of both faculties to pour balm into their bleeding wounds; and the exhortations of the Druids to lull their souls to rest! A military body thus trained up, must appear formidable to the most intrepid. It is to be noticed, by discipline and obedience, not by numbers, that nations become invincible. The Macedonian phalanx, and Roman legions struck terror into their enemies, more by their skill and firmness in offending and defending, than by their numbers. When Charlemagne, warred with the Saxons, he forbid his subjects, under the severest penalties, from supplying them with arms or armour, and so made an easy conquest of them. To what, but to their firmness and discipline, was the Spanish infantry in later times so formidable to their enemies? We have seen in the reign of Peter the Great, a handful of Swedes attack twenty times their number of Russians, entrenched to the teeth, and put them to flight; yet in a very short time after, through the care of our great countryman Marshal Lacy, (a gentleman of the county of Limeric, but who Count Algarotti * calls Laschi, and would feign make a German of) these very Russians became formidable to their enemies, and are at this day as good troops as any in Europe. In fine, it is to their superior discipline only, that Prussia is now so formidable to all her neighbours. So that this constant exercise of the Irish militia will clearly explain, not only why they kept their own country free from foreign insults, but also why they were enabled to pour their troops on the continent; and why in

* Letters to Lord Hervey on the Russian empire.

A.C. the days of Cæsar, and after it, their generals lead on both the Gauls and British troops against the Romans; for we have shewn that their names were Irish, and I think we may reasonably presume, that they really were themselves of the same country.

C H A P. IV.

History of the province of Leath-Mogha, or southern half of Ireland—reign of Moghcorb—inva des Denmark; defeats the king, and places that kingdom under the government of his uncles—attacks and overcomes the king of Munster—is slain in a battle with the Mamonians—the two Fathachs made joint-monarchs—account of the successes of Moghcorb—Munster invaded by the monarch Fiacha; who is slain in an engagement with the Collas—Colla Uas proclaimed monarch—and is succeeded by Muireadhach, son of Fiacha—who sends the Collas against Ulster; they attack and defeat Fergus-Fogha, king of Emania, and plunder and destroy his palace—Muireadhach defeated by Colbhadh, who succeeds him in the monarchy.

TH E province of Leath-Mogha, or the southern half of Ireland, being, as we have seen, erected into a state totally independent of the monarch, requires a more particular degree of attention; and as I am supplied with a most respectable authority, for what I shall advance on this head—I mean the Psalter of Cashill—I shall be as detailed on it, as the nature of so extensive a work will permit.

Fiacha,

Fiacha, whose death we have already related, left two sons, A.C. by name Olioll Flan-more, and Olioll Flan-beg. The first succeeded to the command of South Munster; but Moghcorb, the son of Cormoc Cais, at the same time, agreeable to the will of their grand-father, reigned king of Leath-Mogha. The Psalter of Cashill highly extolls this prince for his bravery, hospitality, and humanity. The mother of Moghcorb, was a Danish princess, her name Oiruid, called Ilchrothach, or the All Lovely. The first act of his reign was raising the Leinster tribute of O'Drisceol, as a mark of his sovereignty over that people. Soon after his two uncles, Danish princes, by name Airid and Osna, came to Ireland to claim his protection, being expelled their country. Influenced by his mother, he prepares a large fleet, and with a select body of troops, taken out of the Munster and Leinster militia, he invades Denmark. The Dane prepares to meet him. The battle was fierce, bloody, and well fought! The superior discipline of the Irish at length prevailed, the Danes were totally defeated; and there fell on their side, the king of Denmark, his four sons and four brothers, besides numbers of his nobility, and 3000 of his choicest soldiers. Moghcorb, having now the ascendancy, caused his uncles to be proclaimed joint-kings, exacted Cain, or tribute, from the country, and returned home crowned with glory. My authority says, that the news of this great victory extended over all quarters, and was the theme of the bards and antiquarians, for very many years after.

The great fame of Moghcorb, could not be agreeable to Carbre; and besides, he exceedingly regretted the not being able to exact tribute, from so rich an extent of Ireland. The battle of Gabhra has been represented as the consequence of the rebellion of the Fine Laighean, or Leinster troops. The sensible reader will easily perceive, that this could not be the case; and that the sovereignty of Leinster was a part of Leath-Mogha, which owed no

A.C. obedience whatever to the monarch. No, it was the ambition of Carbre, which, like that of his father, prompted him to take up arms against the king of Munster, in hopes of establishing his power over that fertile province. Moghcorb summons Osgur, the grandson of Fion, to attend his standard, being Righ-Fine, or general of the Leinster forces. We have yet extant a relation of this battle, supposed to have been related by Oisín, the father of Osgur, to St. Patrick; but it were absurd to suppose that he, who was advanced in years at the battle of Gabhra, should be alive near a century and an half after! It is visibly of a later date, and intended to extol the Fine-Laighean at the expence of truth; yet as it preserves the names and actions of the principal heroes on both sides in this most bloody battle, it merits attention.

The troops quartered in Britain and Scotland fought under the banners of Moghcorb, in this engagement, as well as the tribe of the Fothortuaths and Clana Baoisgne; and besides the Clana Morni, or Conaught troops, we find Carbre's army augmented by nine Catha, or legions from Ulster. This memorable battle was fought near Tara, in Meath; and is generally called the battle of Gabhra. In the Munster book, it is named the battle of Flachta. It was the most bloody that had been fought. Glory, revenge, and courage conspired to make it so. The Leinster and Conaught militia, since the days of Con of the Hundred Battles, were enemies and rivals. The latter constantly fought for the monarchs, whilst the former supported the kings of Leath-Mogha. The entire forces of both provinces appeared under arms that day; and as neither knew fear, or thought of retreating, it became a total carnage on both sides. Of the Fine-Eirin not one escaped alive but Oisín, the father of Osgur; and the Clana Morni, or Conacians, experienced the same fate! Osgur, the general, after performing prodigies, fell by the sword of the monarch Carbre; and he in return met the same fate from the arm of Moghcorb,
The

The Clana Deagha, or Munster militia, were also totally ruined; A C.
 but a new corps soon replaced them, not their inferiors in bravery and discipline. After Cormoc Cas, they were called Dal-Gas; and not only submitted to the military trials of probation, mentioned in the last chapter; but, by way of pre-eminence, were constantly to be the van-guard in every battle, and the rear in every retreat.

The only princes that survived this dreadful carnage, were Moghcorb, and Aodh, king of Conaught. This last, the year after, raised a new army, engaged the Mamonians at Spaltrach, and defeated their troops. In this engagement fell the gallant Moghcorb.

The two Fathachs, grandsons of Mac Con, of the house of Ith, 296
 were proclaimed joint-monarchs; but not agreeing, one fell by the sword of his brother; and the friends of the house of Heremon, soon destroyed the other; so that their reign did not last an entire year.

Fiacha, called Streabhthuine, from the place of his education 297
 in Conaught, was called to the throne. He was the son of Carbre, of the line of Heremon. This prince had a brother called Eochaidh Dubhlein; and in them, and in their posterity, was this branch of the royal line of Heremon separated. From the son of Fiacha are the Clana Neill, and their tribe in Conaught descended; and from the sons of Eochaidh, the Orgiallians boast their origin.

In Leath-Mogha, Fearchorb is said to have succeeded his father; 298
 and after his decease that Olioll, the son of Fiacha Muilleathan, was proclaimed sovereign of Leath-Mogha; but besides that this is a manifest anachronism, it carries not the appearance of justice. By the will of Olioll-Ollum, which it is agreed on was religiously observed for some centuries, the sovereignty of southern Ireland descended alternately to the issues of Eogan and Cormoc. So that when the chief of one family commanded the entire, the

A.C. chief of the other, was only king of his province; but on the death of the first, the head of the other family succeeded to the supreme command. For this reason Olioll Flan-beg, the son of Fiacha, of the Eoganachts, must have swayed the sceptre of Leath-Mogha, after Moghcorb. Add to this, by supposing him to succeed Fearchorb, it must be at so advanced an age, as in itself would incapacitate him from ruling.

Olioll was the son of Fiacha Muilleathan, and brother to Olioll Flan-more. It is singular that the elder brother, who was only king of South Munster, and had no children, was so distressed at it, that he lived not many years; and on his death requested it of his brother and successor, that he might be so placed in the regal list, as that, in future genealogies, he might be traced, not as his brother, but as his father. By this means his disgrace would be hid from posterity. He has been accordingly so placed, and this anecdote at the same time preserved, so that all the pedigrees from this branch of the Heberian line, pass immediately from Olioll Flan-beg to his father Fiacha, without any notice at all of his brother, notwithstanding his pains to the contrary. Of this prince I can trace nothing particular; so that I conclude his sovereignty of southern Ireland, was of no great duration; and that Fearchorb, the son of Moghcorb, of the Dal-Gas race, succeeded, not preceded him.

306 The Psalter of Cashill is lavish in its praises of this prince, for his unbounded hospitality, liberality, humanity, and intrepidity; and affirms, that in all these points, he had not an equal; and that he never sat to an entertainment with a less number than 100 of his nobility. He fought likewise several battles. The Lagenians chearfully paid their tribute; and he defended the present county of Clare from the invasions of the Conacians, who claimed it as their territory. Not only this, but he carried the war into their own country, defeated them in several battles,

and dispossessed many of the ancient Damnonii of their estates, which he bestowed on some of his followers of the Deaghaid line. A principal reason why Fearchorb was so active to secure his territories from the incursions of the Conacians, was, that North Munster was the hereditary patrimony of his family, and of course they must be materially interested in opposing the attempts of the Conacians. The reign of this prince was but seven years; so that after his death, and during the life of Fiacha the monarch, Daire-Cearb, the son of Olioll Flan-beg, of the Eoganachts, I must suppose to have been saluted king of southern Ireland, according to the will of Olioll-Ollum; and that his cousin Aongus, the son of Fearchorb, was, during his life, confined to his principality of North Munster. I must here once for all remark, that though the Psalter of Cashill is minute in its relations of the posterity of both houses; yet the exploits of the Dal-Gas, or line of North Munster, are what are chiefly attended to; but as we know the alternate succession to the supreme command was religiously adhered too, I labour to supply the defect, by thus supposing (what I think was the case) that the eldest branch of the southern line always succeeded to the crown, after the death of the last chief of the northern one. The battle which put a period to the life of the monarch Fiacha, must then have happened in the administration of Daire Cearb, king of southern Ireland.

The monarch Fiacha (as his ancestors) saw with grief, the richest half of Ireland deny his power and authority; and he rightly judged that the death of Fearchorb, was a favourable period to extend his power over that fertile country. He therefore summonses all the Cineal-Cuind, or posterity of Con, to attend his standard; and sends a large body of chosen troops to invade Munster, under the command of his son Muireadhach, whilst, with a respectable army, he himself encamps on the plains of

A.C. Tara, ready to reinforce his son when necessary. The sons of his brother, who were also very powerful, raised another army, under pretence of aiding their uncle, but in reality to secure the succession to themselves. The book of Orgial * is very minute in relating this revolution. They were called the three Collas: the eldest, Colla Uas, or the Noble; from whom the Mac Donnels, (from Domhnel, a successor of his so called), both in Scotland and Ireland; the Mac Douel, or Doyles, the Mac Rorys, the Clan Títhigh or O'Sheehies, the Clan Cheirin, or O'Kerins, O'Gniefes, &c. From Colla dha Crioch, the second son of Eochaidh, sprung the Mac Mahons of Orgial, the Mac Guires of Fermanagh, O'Hanlon, Mac Anaigh, Mac Manus, Mac Eagan, O'Kelly, O'Madin or Madagin, O'Nealan, &c. of the posterity of Colla-Mean, I find no record.

The Collas thus encamped, waited an for opportunity to declare themselves; and the success of the gallant Muireadhach, in Munster, convinced them that time was precious, for he carried every thing before him there. They therefore challenge their uncle to fight them, whilst his son was yet engaged elsewhere. He consults his chief Druid, as was the custom, as to the event of the war. He predicts, that if his nephews fall in this battle, the sovereignty of Ireland will descend to some other family; but if the contrary, that it will continue in his own. The gallant Fiacha, though disturbed at the report, yet said that he would cheerfully resign his life, to preserve the crown to his posterity. He next day led forth his troops to battle, and eagerly pushed on to the midst of the fight, to sacrifice his life to the good of his posterity; for the belief of the transmigration of souls, as Cæsar observes, made the Celtæ prodigal of life—thus Lucan—

* Leabhar Lecan, ii.

“ —Inde ruendi

A.C.

“ In ferrum mens prona viris, animæque capaces.

“ Mortis : & ignavum redituræ parcere vitæ.”

By the death of Fiacha, and the absence of his son, Colla Uas 327
was proclaimed monarch. The son on this news withdraws from
Munster; but his army being very inferior to that of his anta-
gonist, prudence dictated to him for the present negotiation.
The power of the Damnonii was now brought to a low ebb
in Conaught; and Colla promised to support him in his usurpa-
tion of that crown, provided he relinquished his claim to the mo-
narchy; which he readily agreed to, as knowing that in the
end, this would be the most likely means of bringing such a re-
volution about. Most writers affirm, that, at the end of four years,
Colla was dispossessed of the crown by Muireadhach; but the 331
Leabhar Lecan says, he then died, and that the son of Fiacha was
peaceably proclaimed monarch.

The Collas, the brothers, immediately fly, and repair to the
Pictish court, where they are most affectionately received, their
mother being sister to that king. He ceased not his importu-
nities with the monarch Muireadhach, till he obtained their par-
don. He received them at Tara with great humanity, and to 335
shew his sincerity, he determined upon forming a considerable
establishment for them; their former estates being otherwise dis-
posed of, on account of their rebellion.

Though the Heremonians were very powerful in Ulster, yet
the Irian line, now called kings of Emania *only*, still held a con-
siderable part of their ancient inheritance; fearing no attacks
from Munster, that prince being otherwise engaged. The mo-
narch judged the present a favourable opportunity totally to de-
press this great house. Princes never want for pretences to justify
war and injustice. He alleged, that Feargus, the great grand-
father

A.C. father of the present king of Emania, had violated the laws of hospitality in burning the beard and hair of his great-grandfather, Cormoc; an insult never to be forgiven, as he was obliged to lie concealed for many months after; and to revenge that indignity, near a century later, the present monarch sends an army of seven legions (21,000 men), to conquer their country!

336 The Collas, for whom this settlement was intended, accordingly invade Ulster; and Feargus Fohgha, the king of Emania, at the head of six Catha, or legions, waits their motions at Gaelai. The two armies soon engaged; and the setting sun only put a period to the carnage on the first day. The evening of the second, the Irians gave way, and retired to Glean-raige, to put their wounded in a place of safety. The third day they returned to the fight with more rancour and animosity than ever. It was again renewed on the fourth and fifth day; but the sixth day completed the ruin of the Irian army; Feargus, their king, the remains of the Craobh-ruadh, and most of the nobility being cut off. The conquerors eagerly pursue their victory; every thing gives way to them. They march to Emania; and after plundering this superb palace of every thing that was valuable, set it on fire. But, though it was never after habitable, yet to this day, I am assured, the extensive ruins near Ardmach, in some measure justifies what antiquity has related of this mighty fabric. Thus the bloody and decisive battle of Mullach Leath-dhearg was the ruin of the palace and city of Emania, after flourishing the theme of the senachies and bards, for near eight centuries; but

“ Non indignemur mortalia corpora solvi;

“ Cernimus exemplis, oppida posse mori!”

The land thus conquered they called Orgial; because, by agreement with the present monarch, for themselves, and for their posterity,

terity, whenever hostages were demanded from them, if *shackled*, A.C. their fetters were to be of pure gold; hence Orgial, from Or, Gold, and Gial, an Hostage. This tract, commonly called to this day Uriel, comprehends the present counties of Lowth, Monaghan, and Ardmach.

To load prisoners of royal blood with fetters of gold and silver, was a very ancient custom, and a mark of honour, to distinguish the wearers from others of less elevated rank. This ceremony was used to Darius*; Artavafades, king of Armenia, when taken by Mark Anthony, by way of doing him honour, he caused his fetters, whilst in prison, to be of pure silver†; and on the day of triumph they were of gold, to shew the highest respect to the royal captive‡. “Catenis (says my author) sed “ne quid honori deesset, aureis vinxit.”

Aongus Tireach, the son of Fearchorb, filled the throne of Leath-Mogha for twelve years. He is called Taile-Tireach, or the Taxer of Countries, having, we are told, successfully invaded Spain, and sent his fleets to Danemark. He is highly celebrated for his strict justice, and impartial decisions, upon every appeal.

Upon his decease Fiadhach, the son of Daire-Cearb, of the Eoganachts, according to alternate succession, was proclaimed king of Leath-Mogha. His daughter was married to Eochaidh, king of Conaught, and afterwards monarch of Ireland.

Caolbhadh, of the house of Ir, had his revenge of the monarch Muireadhach, having defeated his army, and killed him in single combat, after a glorious reign of thirty years.

This Caolbhadh, the last king of the royal house of Ir, after 358 the above victory, marched straightway to Tara, where he was saluted monarch; but his glory was of a short duration, being

* Curt. lib. v. cap. 12.

† Dion. lib. xlix.

‡ Paterc. lib. ii. cap. 82.

A.C. cut off in battle at the end of the year, by the son of his predecessor.

C H A P. V.

Eochaidh appointed monarch—attempts to collect the Leinster tax; but is opposed, and his troops defeated—is succeeded by Criomthan; who meditates an invasion of the Roman provinces in Britain and Gaul; and appoints Conall regent during his absence—is poisoned after his return—Niall elected emperor—sails to Scotland, to support the Irish colony against the Picts—makes an irruption into the Roman territories in Britain; returns to Ireland—invades Gaul, and returns with a great body; and St. Patrick, made captive—regulates disorders in Ireland; and undertakes another expedition against Gaul; is killed on the Banks of the Loire.

359

EOCHAI DH, the son of Muireadhach, the son of Fiacha, of the house of Heremon, was proclaimed emperor. When king of Conaught, he married Munig, called Fion, or the Fair, daughter to Fiadhach, king of Leath-Mogha, of the line of Heber, and race of the Eoganachts. By her he had four sons, Brian, Fiachre, Fergus, and Olioll. From the two first are descended the succeeding kings of Conaught; and their posterity are distinguished by the names of Hy-Brunes and Hi-Fiachres, from these two leaders.

By Carrina, a princess of the Saxon nation, and the constant ally of Ireland, he had the renowned hero Niall, surnamed of the Nine Hostages. Eochaidh was engaged in a fierce war against the united power of Leath-Mogha. He wanted to raise the Boroimhe Leaghain, or Leinster-Tax, payable to the monarch; and Lugha, called Lamh-dhearg, or of the Bloody Hand, (being his ensign), of the Dal-Gas line, being then king of Leath-Mogha, opposed the pretensions of the monarch, and sent large supplies
to

to Eana, called Cinfelach (from whom O'Kinsellagh) a descendant of Cathire-more, then king of Leinster. He found this diversion the more necessary, as the Conacians were raising great levies, to invade Munster, and wrest the present county of Clare from that province, and add it to that of Conaught.

Success attended the southern troops in all their enterprizes. Eana and his allies defeated the imperial troops in fifteen different battles, says the Psalter of Cashill; and, instead of their being able to raise the Boroimhe-Leaghain, we are told that Eana, by the peace that followed, received from every Brugh, or village in Leath-Cuin, or Conaught, and Ulster, an ounce of pure gold. Lugha was equally successful in his invasion of Conaught; for he kept the war from his own country; defeating their chosen troops in seven pitched battles, in which many of their princes and nobility fell; and raising contributions on the country. The Conacians, reduced to great distress, sue for peace; and the ancient limits of North Munster are acknowledged in the most ample manner. The better to secure his frontiers from new irruptions of the Conacians, he made Fearan-Cliomh, or sword-land, of the whole country, from the borders of the county of Galway to Loops-head. So great was the power of Lugha now, says my authority, that he dictated to the monarch, and expelled all foreigners the kingdom. He invaded Wales, and defeated the Welsh and their allies in several bloody battles, raising contributions on the country, and bringing back with him many of their princes and nobility as hostages. He poured his troops into North Britain; and, in conjunction with the Saxons and Picts, successfully attacked the Britons and their Roman masters. Ammianus Marcellinus, the historian*, and the poet Claudian, who flourished after the æra in question, bear ample testimonies of

* Lib. xxvi. xxvii.

A.C. these invasions, and of the distresses the Britons were reduced to by them. Claudian celebrates the successes which Theodosius gained over these allies, in the following lines :

“ ———Maduerunt Saxone fuso

“ Orcades ; incaluit Pictorum sanguine Thule ;

“ Scotorum Cumulus, flevit glacialis Ierne.”

But in this account, as well as in his relation of the issue that were to proceed from the marriage of the daughter of Stilicho with the emperor Honorius, we may venture to pronounce that he shewed himself more the poet, than the historian or prophet ; since it is certain that our writers make no mention of any defeat of their troops in Britain about this time ; on the reverse, their successes are recorded : and it is equally true, that Honorius had no issue by this marriage, notwithstanding the prediction of the bard.

367 On the decease of Eochaidh, who, after all, died peaceably at Tara, Criomhthan, the son of Fiachadh, the son of Daire-Cearb, of the race of Heber and Eugenic line, through the great influence of his cousin Lugha, was proclaimed monarch ; and in return for this, on the death of Lugha, which happened soon after, he had his son Conall Each-Luath appointed king of Leath-Mogha, to the great prejudice of his own family.

The Eugenicians could not passively see so great an infraction of the will of their common ancestor Olioll-Ollum. They remonstrated to the monarch on his injustice, insisting that the right of governing southern Ireland, was now in the Eugenic line. A Feis, or assembly of the estates of Munster is convened ; and it is agreed upon, that in the present instance Connall is an usurper, and should resign the crown to Core, the son of Luigh, of the posterity of Eogan, (who they declared of a proper age to govern)

as the father of Connal, of the Dal-Gas race, had been the last sovereign of Leath-Mogha. This was a most just decision, and proved the moral rectitude of the estates, who, neither the menaces of the monarch, nor the power of Connal, could make it swerve in the least from the line of truth. Nor should the equity and moderation of Connal be forgot; on the contrary, both should be held up as mirrors for modern times; since instead of supporting his usurpation by the law of arms, as he certainly could, Connal peaceably acquiesced to the decisions of the estates, and surrendered the crown of Munster to Core. A.C.

This intricate affair being thus happily and peaceably adjusted, Criomhthan, who is in the Psalter of Cashill styled monarch of Ireland and Albany, and leader of the Franks and Saxons, prepared a formidable navy, and raised a large body of troops, which were transported to Scotland; there, in conjunction with the Picts and Saxons, to break through the Roman wall, and carry desolation through all her British provinces. But before he entered on this expedition, he appointed Connal, whose integrity he could depend on, regent of Ireland. These frequent invasions and attacks upon Britain, or rather on the Romans, are too well attested by British and Roman writers, to be farther insisted on. The extreme vanity of the Scots of Albany, in presuming to arrogate to the North Britons *only* the glory of these days, in exclusion of their Irish ancestors, has been so fully exposed by the most respectable writers of Britain and Ireland, that I should deem it an insult to the understanding of my reader, to say any thing farther on this head, than barely to remark, that to a contemplative mind, it must appear very extraordinary how the North Britons should in early days acquire so great a power, as to be able to attack, and, for near four centuries, keep the whole power of South Britain, aided by Rome, on the defensive rather than the offensive; whilst in subsequent periods, almost to our own days,

A.C.

they were seldom able to oppose the British Saxons only ! Besides, in the first century, Tacitus * positively declares, that the Romans could never count on the peaceable possession of Britain, till they had conquered Ireland ; the country, as he observed, that constantly aided all their efforts at independence. Rapin says, that Maximus, after defeating the Picts, threatened Ireland with an invasion, but they prevented this by a peace ‡. Our writers make no mention of this.

From North Britain he prepares, in conjunction with his Saxon allies, to invade the maritime coast of France. It is curious enough, in confirmation of what our historians have delivered, to find, that in this fourth century, the invasions on the Roman provinces were so frequent, that Constantine and his successors established a fleet, whose sole business was to guard the coasts from the mouth of the Rhine to lower Normandy, and which they called *Littus Saxonicum*, as the great coalition formed by these people against Rome, was named the Saxon Ligue. They likewise erected forts and stations at proper distances, the better to oppose the landing of these people. The most powerful of all this league §, we are told, at this time, and who mostly distressed the Romans, was Maorian. Could we suppose that by misplacing words they could mistake Criman (for so should Criomhthan be pronounced) for Maerian, it would wonderfully elucidate this passage ; because all our writers agree, that this Criomhthan was uncommonly successful in his invasions on the continent ; and because Roman writers (particularly Claudian) are clear, that the Saxons and Picts, in conjunction with the Irish, were the sworn enemies of Rome.

Criomhthan, after returning from the continent, loaded with glory, and the spoils of his enemies, was taken off by poison by

* Vita Julii Agricolaë.

‡ History of England, vol. i. p. 23.

§ Origine des François, p. 304.

his

his own sister, in hopes that her son Brian would succeed him in the monarchy. But tasting of the liquor, the better to deceive the monarch, so violent was its effects, that she also died; nor did any of the issue of Brian ever after succeed to the monarchy, except Tereldach and Roderic, the two last emperors of Ireland. On the death of Criomhthan, several candidates appeared for the succession. Eana, king of Leinster, the better to strengthen his own interest, forcibly seized on the palace of Tara; but soon after evacuated it. Core, king of Leath-Mogha, solicited the suffrages of the princes and electors, but was opposed by the whole force of Leath-Cuin. These last dreaded the power of the Heberians, who, as kings of southern Ireland, acknowledged no kind of dependence on the monarchs, and united as one man to support the claims of the young Niall, who was accordingly elected monarch. Core protested against the validity of this election and supported it by the sword. Much blood was spilt on the occasion. Torna, the laureat of Niall, at length interposed; a peace was concluded by Core's relinquishing his claim, acknowledging Niall's election, and delivering up his son Carbre, with others of his nobles as hostages. In return, he received as presents from the monarch 1000 steeds, 500 suits of armour, 190 gold rings, and fifty gold cups. It was the custom of the Irish, in controverted elections, when a peace was made, that the acknowledged monarch, made presents to his former antagonist—thus when Maolfachlin, surrendered the diadem to Brien Boru, he received from the new monarch, a present of horses and arms, and his attendants were likewise rewarded*.

Niall the Grand, surnamed of the Nine Hostages, the youngest son of the monarch Eochaidh, of the line of Heremon, succeeded to the throne. The Roman power being long on the decline in

* Dail Catha id ir Chore agus Neill.

A.C. Britain; and the Picts a good deal freed from their apprehensions from this quarter, began to look with a jealous eye on the Irish establishment in that country. They would gladly reduce their power, at least make them acknowledge themselves as their tributaries by military tenure. This the last would not agree to; and the Picts prepare by force to compell them. They prefer their complaints to the Irish monarch Niall; and, with a good fleet and army, he landed in Scotland. The Picts were obliged to acknowledge the Irish colony as a people totally independent of them, and owing no allegiance but to the monarchs of Ireland. As a mark of this, Niall called their particular settlements in Albany, Scotia Minor, to distinguish them from Ireland, then called Scotia Major. This transaction is attested not only by our natives, but by British writers *. Nay Hume himself confesses, “that in very ancient language, Scotland means only the country North of the Friths of Clyde and Forth. I shall not make a parade of literature to prove it, *because I do not find that the point is disputed by the Scots themselves* †.” For the indigenous name of Cuine Scuit, used even to this day by us, became, about the period in question, to be adopted by the neighbouring nations; and from the name of Scots, yet retained by the people of North Britain, they have vainly laboured to make it be believed, that the Scots so famous in these and subsequent times, were their British ancestors. But the principal inhabitants of North Britain, at that time, by the confession of Roman as well as Irish writers ‡, were the Picts. The Dal-Riada, or colony of Highland Scots, were of so little consequence *then*, as not to be known as a distinct people, except by these who had the best right to know it, I mean the Irish and Picts. Thus Niall was the first Irish prince,

* Cambrenf. Top. D. iii. cap. 16. Camden's Britan. &c.

† History of England, vol. ii. ‡ Ammian. Marcellin. Claudian, &c.

who

who had the Caledonian Scots acknowledged as a colony totally independent of the Picts. That the Irish were the *only* people known by the name of Scots at that period, and for many centuries after, has been so fully and clearly proved by Routh, Usher, Ward, Colgan, Stillingfleet, Keating, O'Flaherty, Harris, &c. that it would be only losing time to enter into the disquisition. A.C.

After settling this troublesome affair in a peaceable manner, to prevent time for reflection, Niall agreed with the Picts and the Dal-Riada, to prepare for an irruption into Roman Britain. He renewed the league with the Saxons, who the more chearfully agreed to it, as his mother was of that nation. Maximus, who soon after the forming this new league, had himself proclaimed emperor in Britain, landed a large army in Gaul to support his title; and this by the allies was thought a favourable opportunity to commence their operations. They therefore force the Roman wall, and desolation and ruin follow their footsteps. After reducing the poor Britons to great extremity, and plundering the country of every thing that was valuable, they made a regular retreat; and after a fair partition of the booty, the Irish fleet and army returned home for the present. 382

Some have ignorantly asserted, that these invasions of the Irish were from Currachs; but though our own historians should be overlooked on this occasion, sure the testimony of Roman writers ought to be decisive in our favour. How else are we to explain the fine compliment which Claudian under the name of Britain pays to his patron Stilicho?

“ Me quoque vicinis pereuntem gentibus, inquit,

“ Munivit Stilicho, totam cum Scotis Iernam

“ Movit; & infesto spumavit, remige Thetys.

“ Illius effectum curis, ne bella timerem

“ *Scotica* nec *Pictum* tremere, nec littore toto

“ Prospicerem, dubiis venturum *Saxona* ventis.”

A.C At no time were oars used in Currachs, but all antiquity proclaims that large gallies and ships of war were never without them.

As the Saxons assisted the Irish and Picts in this expedition, they now in return called upon Niall to make a diversion in their favour in Gaul; and in a large fleet he conveyed a very considerable army to Brittany, miserably wasting the country, and returning home, loaded with treasure and captives, amongst whom was the great St. Patrick, afterwards Apostle of Ireland. The Scots of Britain have claimed Patrick as their countryman; but it is an absurdity to suppose it. It is confessed that he was one of the captives taken in war. There was no war, but peace and union between the Irish and Picts. With what pretence then could the captains of Niall's fleet, deprive Patrick and his two sisters, with a vast number of other people, of their liberties, and sell them as slaves in Ireland, and they the subjects of his friends and allies? It appears from the most authentic records, that Patrick was from Wales. The Book of Lecan says, his mother was a Frank. She was sister to St. Martin, bishop of Tours. Patrick, with his father, mother, brother, and five sisters, embarked from Wales for Brittany, probably to avoid the dangers and distresses, which a country exposed to hostile invasions must ever be in. Brittany was at this time called Letavia or Letania by the natives, and St. Fiech, in his life of our apostle gives it the same name—but,

“Incidit in Scyllam, qui vult vitare Charybdin!”

The Irish soon after invaded Brittany, and amongst the number of captives they made, was Patrick, and two of his sisters. This invasion of Brittany happened in the year 388, the summer after

Maximus marched his troops from Gaul to Italy, at which time A.C.
St. Patrick was sixteen years old.

Niall returned to Ireland, on account of some disturbances 389
raised in Leinster by Eochaidh, the son of Eana Cinfelach, so
inimical to the monarch his father. On the death of Criomhthan,
and whilst the different candidates were canvassing for the suc-
cession, this Eochaidh, with a chosen band, took possession of the
palace of Tara, the better to strengthen his own claim. But it
seems he had not received the equestrian order; and his Druids
and council expostulated with him, on this notorious violation of
the national laws: for no prince could become a candidate,
much less be elected monarch, though of the royal line of Mile-
fius, who had not received the Gradh-Gaoisge, or order of chi-
valry. Their remonstrances had the proper weight with Eoch-
aidh, and he peaceably evacuated Tara, and relinquished all claims
to the monarchy. The boldness and newness of the attempt,
however, made Niall ever after regard him with a jealous eye.
During his absence, Eochaidh refused paying the Leinster tri-
bute. On the contrary, he wished to extort the tax levied by his
father on the people of Leath-Aim.

Enraged at these pretensions, but more for having killed the
son of his Arch-Druid, Niall with a potent army over-ran the
kingdom of Leinster, levied the usual tribute on that people,
and declared he would lay the whole country in ashes, if
Eochaidh was not delivered up to him. To save it from so great
a calamity, he voluntarily surrendered himself to the monarch,
who caused a strong iron hoop to be fixt round his body, to which
a chain was fixt, which was to pass through a large rock, to
which he was to be tied. Nine men were ordered to see this ex-
ecuted; but with uncommon courage he attacked them with
only this chain, killed some, and being fleet of foot, escaped the
rest, and fled to Scotland, where he was most hospitably received
by his cousin Gabhran, chief of the British Dal-Riada.

A.C. Eanna-Arighach, the son of Conal, of the Dal-Gas race, and house of Heber, by the law of alternate succession, was at this time king of Leath-Mogha. The monarch of Ireland supported the Conacians in their pretensions on the province of Thomond; and the Dal-Gas were so closely pressed, that they found they could not protect this province, without withdrawing their troops from South Munster. The whole tribe were on this occasion assembled; and it was the unanimous opinion, to give up peaceably to the Eugenic line for ever, the entire command of South Munster, they at the same time relinquishing all chieftanry over North Munster. That Cashill and the domain, with its royalties, should belong to the king of Leath-Mogha, for the time to come, to be elected out of the two houses as usual; but that his real authority should be circumscribed to this domain, and his own hereditary territories only. To all this the Eugenicians gladly agreed; but thus, by dividing their power, they ceased to be so formidable to the future monarchs. It was however a measure which necessity at this time pointed out to the Dal-Gas; and now their entire strength being collected, they were not only able to make head against the Conacians but even to confine them within their own limits.

Niall having established peace at home, collects a greater force than ever, to over-run Roman Gaul. He summoned all his tributaries to his standard. The Picts prepare their auxiliaries; and Gabhran, chief of the British Dal-Riada, as a feudatory prince, attends with his forces. On their landing in Brittany, and finding no very considerable army to oppose them, they spread themselves over all the country. Eochaidh, the deposed king of Leinster, who had taken shelter in Scotland, followed the standard of his friend Gabhran in this expedition, in hopes of making his peace with the monarch; but the mediation of friends having proved fruitless, Eochaidh took the resolution of destroying him. An opportunity soon offered. The king, seated on the banks of the

the Loire one day, received his death by an arrow shot at him. A.C. Soon after which the army reimbarked, under the command of Dathy, nephew to the deceased, bringing with them the body of the deceased; and he was interred with great funeral pomp at Roilig-na-Riogh.

C H A P. VI.

Account of Niall's issue—is succeeded in the monarchy by his nephew Daithi; who grants an asylum to refugees from Britain, Gaul, and other parts of Europe—joins with the Piets, Saxons, &c. in invading the Roman settlements in Britain—the Romans having withdrawn their troops from Britain, the Scots and Piets break through the Roman wall, drive the Britons from their defences, and plunder the country—Daithi advances against the Romans in Gaul, as far as the Alps, where he is killed by lightning.

NIALL the Grand, whose exploits we have epitomized, before he undertook his last continental expedition, made his will, and disposed of his hereditary principality amongst his children. As the posterity of this prince made a most distinguished figure in our history; and that from this house, for almost six centuries, the monarchs of Ireland were chosen, a single instance only excepted, it is proper to give the reader some account of them.—Niall had eight sons, four of whom remained in Meath and its environs; the others acquired possessions in the North. The issue of these eight sons have been distinguished by

A.C. the titles of Northern and Southern Hi Neills, from the situation of their territories with respect to each other. Maine, Loaghaire, Connall-Crimthan, and Fiach, with their posterities, settled in Meath; and these are called the Southern Hi Neill; sometimes Clana-Colman, from Colman the Great; sometimes Cincal Slaine, from Aodh-Slaine. The posterity of Eogan, Conall-Gulban, Carbre, and Eana, are the Northern Hi Neills.

By this will he appointed, during his absence, Maine, Ard-Comhairce Eirin Uile, or chief regent of all Ireland, and settled on him a tract of land, from Cruachan to Loch-ribh, as the Book of Lecan sets forth. Others fix his seat in the present county of Longford. O'Sionach, or Fox, lord of Taff, Magaully, Mag Caren, O'Braoin, O'Quin, and O'Daly, &c. were the principal families from this house. On Laoghaire he bestowed land from Trim to Tara, from him called Hi Laoghaire: O'Cuindealbhain, or O'Kindelan, was the chief of this great house; the present O'Kindelan is colonel of the regiment of Ireland, and governor of Zamora, in Spain. Connall-Crimthan had the territory about Magh-Breagh, and the O'Malochlins were his successors. And to Fiacha he gave a tract about Uisneach, in the very center of Ireland; the Mac Geoghagans, O'Molloys, &c. represent this house.

Of the Northern Hi Neills, Eogan, or Eon, got the country from him called Tir-one, and whose descendants are the O'Neils. Connal's tract yet goes by the name of Tir-Connell; and the chiefs of this house assumed the name of O'Donnel, from a celebrated ancestor so called. Cairbre, who was the eldest of Niall's sons, and his brother Eana, had tracts near Loch-Erne, called Carbre-Gaura and Tir-Eana.

The reason why Niall was surnamed of the Nine Hostages, was because he detained at Tara hostages from so many provinces;

vinces; as 1st from Munster; 2d from Leinster; 3d Ulster; A.C.
4th Conaught; 5th the Picts; 6th Albanian Scots; 7th
the British Brigantes; 8th the Letanians, or Armoric Britons;
and 9th from Normandy.

Daithi, the son of Fiachra, and nephew to Niall, was his suc- 406
cessor in the empire. About this time the confusions and dis-
tresses in Britain and Gaul, made numbers of people from both
places, and other parts of Europe, flee to Ireland, as to the only
country where peace, subordination, and hospitality, were *then*
preserved. The Irish received these strangers with their ac-
customed benevolence; assigning them towns to live in, and
lands to occupy. These places yet retain the names of the dif-
ferent people on whom they were then bestowed.—Thus in the
county of Limeric, we have Gall-Baile, or the Gauls Town; the
remains of old abbies, and other pious foundations, *at this day*
proclaiming its former grandeur: Baile na Francoigh, or the
Franks town, &c. and scarce a county of the kingdom in which
you will not find some villages or lands by the names of these
different people, as the British, Saxon, Gaulish or Frank Town!
Thus whilst they manifested to all Europe their humanity and hos-
pitality, they enriched the country by new inhabitants, and by fo-
reign arts and manufactures; by this means making up for the
constant drains, which the British and continental wars made
unavoidable.

But whilst humanity and sound policy co operated in encou-
raging these foreign refugees, Daithi lost not sight of the great
object of Irish counsels, since the first landing of Cæsar in Bri-
tain, namely, *the giving the Romans so much employ abroad, that*
they would never think of bringing the war into their own country:
For this purpose he prepared a formidable fleet and army, to de-
stroy, in conjunction with his tributaries, the Dal-Riada of North
Britain,

A.C. Britain, and with his allies the Picts and Saxons, the remains of the Roman power in Britain ; the safer after this to make a more powerful invasion on the continent.

The distresses of the Romans on the continent obliging them to withdraw their troops from Britain, and with them to carry off as many of the British youth as were able to bear arms, the kingdom had little defence, save in their walls and forts, which were repaired ; and in the children of the veteran Romans who remained behind. The Scots and Picts united, soon attack these walls. In vain do the enemy labour to defend them. They are shot dead with arrows, with Cran Tubals, or flings, or dragged off the walls by iron grapples, constructed for that purpose, just as the Romans were in Gaul in the days of Cæsar, when the Gauls besieged Cicero. In fine, they force through these boundaries, and nothing but carnage and ruin are seen on every side. Roman writers say, this invasion was repelled by Constantine, who, from a common soldier, was raised to the purple in Britain ; and that after this, he made peace with the Scots and Picts, in order to be more at liberty, to establish his dominion in Gaul. Our writers however take no notice of any such defeat ; and if he made peace with them, which is not improbable, like Stilicho, I am persuaded he purchased it by force of money, not of arms.

410 To prove this, as soon as it was known for certain in Ireland, that Constantine was cut off, Daithi prepares for a second incursion into Britain. In vain do the poor Britons implore the protection of Rome ; unable to relieve, they send them a formal renunciation of all power and sovereignty over them ; and they become reduced to unheard-of distresses, through the cruelty and rapacity of their new masters.

414 Again they renew their applications to Rome ; and some successes enabling these last to send them relief, a legion is landed in Britain,

Britain, which suddenly and unexpectedly attacking different detached parties of the Scots and Picts, and at the same time the country every where rising against them, they are obliged to make a precipitate retreat beyond the Roman wall. The Romans direct the Britons to repair their wall, and prepare for the future like men, to defend themselves; but these last (says Bede *) having amongst them none skilfull in stone work, made it up in the best manner they could with earth. In the mean time, the Roman legion quitted Britain, and their old enemies the Scots and Picts prepare for a new irruption, to punish the Britons for again calling in the Romans. Their armies united, attack and break through the Roman wall; and looking on the Britons as a people lost to every sense of liberty, and the avowed slaves of Rome, they treat them with every mark of cruelty and indignity. Destitute of domestic resource, they send ambassadors to Rome, imploring protection, for a people only persecuted for their attachment to her. Their complaints are favourably heard, and a fresh legion is sent to their relief. The straggling parties of Scots are cut off, the whole country assail them, and they again precipitately retreat out of the Roman provinces. 415

The Roman general acquaints the Britons of the numberless enemies Rome has to encounter with; and that they must no longer expect succours from them, scarce able to defend their new frontiers. They however repaired their wall with more strength and firmness than ever, adding fresh redoubts at proper distances. This wall, Bede tells us, was every where twelve feet high, and eight feet broad †. The coasts round about they also fortified with bulwarks from place to place, to oppose their landing from their ships. And now exhorting the Britons to acquit themselves 426

* Hist. Eccles. Brit. lib. i. cap. 12.

† Ibid.

manfully,

A.C. manfully, and never desert the alliance of Rome, they take an eternal farewell of the country, after a possession of near five centuries !

The Scots and Picts hearing of this final dereliction of Britain, attack the Roman wall in different places. Their grappling irons, their arrows, and their slings, annoy the enemy, whilst with battering rams they shake their famous wall to the foundation ! From their Currachs, constructed for this purpose, they land fresh troops from their fleet to attack these fortresses, raised to oppose this landing. Their hands thus full every where, and fresh men
418 constantly pushing on, the Britons are compelled to quit their works, and betake themselves to a shameful flight. And now it was, that they experienced all the shocking cruelties of lawless victors, which Gildas and Bede so pathetically deplore. So great was their rapacity, and so frequent their depredations, that the country was reduced to the utmost misery, and want of necessaries, as well as the apprehension of catching these epidemic disorders, incident to cold and famine, obliged the Scots and Picts to quit the country, but with a resolution to return at a more proper season.

The distressed situation of the Roman affairs in Gaul, we may presume were no more overlooked by the Irish, than by the other enemies of that people ; however, I am not authorised from our annals, to say that they made any formal invasion on the continent at this period, except the one in which this Daithi perished.
426 The Britons being reduced to the lowest ebb, Daithi prepares a formidable army to invade the continent. In the two last reigns, the Irish arms prevailed only on the maritime coasts of Gaul, in Brittany and Normandy ; in the present we see them unite with their allies, and carry terror and ruin to the very foot of the Alps,

where Daithi was killed by lightning. The death of this gallant prince discouraged greatly his troops. About thirty years before, an army of Barbarians were ruined by tempest and lightning, in attempting to cross the Alps; and this disaster, which might probably be resolved into natural causes, was, by the Christians, declared a miracle in favour of the emperor Theodosius. The most part of this Irish army were Pagans: they did not want for superstition and credulity; and wished not to engage but with men. Their army therefore, under the command of Laogaire, son to the hero Niall, and cousin-german to the deceased, made a regular retreat, bringing home with them the embalmed body of Daithi, who was interred with great funeral pomp at Roilig na Riogh.

When Daithi, from king of Conaught, was called to the monarchy, he relinquished that crown to his brother Amalgad, as Criomhthan before him did the crown of Leath-Mogha. A proof how jealous the people were of their liberty, and how careful they were to prevent the monarchs assuming too great a power. The king of Leath-Mogha in this reign, was Nafraoich, the son of Core, of the Eugenic line, and race of Heber. His power extended over South Munster and the royalty of Cashill only; whilst Cas, brother to Eana, of the Dal-Gas, governed North Munster, and Randubh, the son of Eochaidh, the son of Eana, the kingdom of Leinster.

Cas, king of North Munster, had twelve sons, who were the sources of great families; 1st, Blood, his eldest and successor; 2d, Casin, from whom O'Casin; 3d, Lugh Dealbhodh; 4th, Seadhna; 5th, Aongus Ceannathrach; 6th, Cormoc; 7th, Carthan; 8th, Caineach; 9th, Aongus Ceanaitin; 10th, Aoh; 11th, Loifgean; and 12th, Nac. Cas made an equal partition of his lands between these sons. Lugh Dealbhodh being an

A.C. excellent soldier, and having in his pay a select body of troops, lent these out. By this means he gained large estates in Leinster and Conaught, which after him were called Dealvnas.

These invasions from Ireland, and each army extending its conquests beyond the other, wonderfully elucidate the mutilated accounts, delivered by Roman writers, of these days of war and anarchy. Procopius, in his sixth book of the wars of the Goths, tells us, that the Germans endeavoured to reduce the Armoricans, (i. e. the people of Flanders, Normandy, and Brittany) on account of their changing their ancient love of liberty, to a veneration for Rome and for slavery, and therefore frequently invaded their territories; till at length, by force or by friendship, they prevailed upon them to join in the grand confederacy against Rome, which they strengthened by marriages, and other alliances. The alliances between the Irish and Germans, particularly the Saxons, Claudian clearly attests; and the first invasions of Normandy and Brittany under Criomhthan and Niall, being mostly confined to the sea coasts, add dignity to the relation. The Armoricans seeing Rome no longer able to protect them, and finding their trade lessening, and their country exposed to frequent depredations and insults, perceived the necessity of altering their system of politics. “The
“maritime and other provinces of Gaul, says Zozimus, (lib. vi.)
“intending to free themselves from the Roman yoke, expelled
“their governors and garrisons.” All these convulsions and revolutions in Britain, and the maritime coasts of Gaul, corresponding so exactly with the times of the invasions of Criomhthan and Niall, leave not the least doubt of the *invasive quarter*, or of the *primum mobile* of this conjuration. The time that the Armoricans united in the grand confederacy against Rome, must
6 have

have happened in the reign of Niall ; and his second invasion of Gaul, in which we see he advanced far into the country, in all appearance was projected in conjunction with these people, to support them in their attempts of expelling the Roman garrisons. In fine, in the present reign, we see Daithi march to the foot of the Alps ; and at this time it is known, that the enemies of Rome triumphed both in Gaul and Germany. A.C.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

REPORT OF THE

COMMISSIONERS OF THE
LAND OFFICE
FOR THE YEAR 1881
IN RESPONSE TO A RESOLUTION
PASSED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
MARCH 10, 1881



AND OF THE

LAND OFFICE

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